

The Asian Question – Chapter 17

“That’s just temporary and in order to do it, he had to talk to the Congressional Leaders. He didn’t do it when Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans and if it wasn’t for the fact that so many law enforcement people died in the attacks, I doubt he would have done it now. I guess it’s a case of the needs of the many overcoming the needs of the one.”

“Spock said that in *Star Trek: The Wrath of Khan*.”

“Right, it went something like:”

If I may be so bold, it was a mistake for you to accept promotion. Commanding a starship is your first, best destiny; anything else is a waste of material.

I would not presume to debate you.

That is wise. Were I to invoke logic, however, logic clearly dictates that the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few.

Or the one.

You are my superior officer. You are also my friend. I have been and always shall be yours.

“I think you’ve got it Sgt. Collins. Did you like the Star Trek movies?”

“My favorite was Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home. I’ll have a Communications Specialist by in the next day or so and get that radio up. You need to stop by the Sheriff’s office, they’re expecting you.”

“Why?”

“This is mostly a civilian show Mr. Ryan, being coordinated by civilian authorities. I had you on the list because of your location and the fact that you and your wife handled that first attack yourselves.”

“You’re not from around here are you?”

“Ft. Bliss. I’ll get a pass to go home soon. I really miss my wife and kids. We were here providing security for the PAC-3 and THAAD battery. It’s not that we’re far from home but we haven’t seen our families in a while.”

“I heard the Kitty Hawk got sunk.”

“You heard wrong, Mr. Ryan. The Chinese launched on all 7 carrier Strike Groups and the intercept on the warhead aimed at the Kitty Hawk Strike Group was only a partial

success, damaged the warhead but the missile hit the carrier. They limped the carrier back to Hawaii, but since it was scheduled to be decommissioned, they haven't repaired it. The White House saw this coming about a week ahead of time and put out the initial warning that people should have food and water available."

"The same guy told me that he thought we probably hit Beijing."

"We did do that, but it was a follow-up launch. Most of the countries got their athletes out."

I was on a roll with the Sgt., he seemed to be reasonably open and I decided to find out as much as I could. We sure weren't hearing much on the radio.

"I heard about 60 warheads got past our ABM system."

"You need to get a better source that's also incorrect. The THAAD and the PAC-3 systems worked very well. They were short on perfect, but it's still a new system. 24 locations were hit. The west coast was up against their submarine launched systems and a lot of those got through. They took out San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle. Nellis intercepted the one they aimed at Las Vegas. "

"What's with all of the Suburban's around town?"

"They flew in some vehicles on the C-5B and the remainder came cross country in a caravan once they could move. The word is that the Presidential party is dividing up with some going to Petersen AFB and the President to Crawford. I understand that Cheney is going to Cheyenne Mountain."

"Does this program of yours have a name?"

"Neighborhood Watch; as I said, it's mostly a civilian program with us lending support. They're doing everything possible to keeping food in the stores and a limited supply of fuel available. Be sure to stop by the Sheriff's office."

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It turned out that the Neighborhood Watch was using SINCGARS equipment but the Sheriff had a separate tactical net from the Army. Our responsibility was to report any traffic on US 54. They didn't even pass out badges to make us Reserve Deputies. In order to keep that radio, Sue and I had to be on the net. It didn't seem that we had a lot of choice so I talked it over with her and we signed up. It was a perfect job for a middle-aged couple, all we had to do was sit in the OP room and report all vehicles.

Since the Sgt. was sending by a soldier to get the radio up, I decided to let him swap out the antenna. The mast was pretty fancy, you could remotely raise and lower it and once it was down, you could tip it to access the antennas on top. Before we went home,

I bought a Diamond D-130 J, another spool of RG-213U and two more standoffs. When we got home Friday night, I installed the software from the CD onto my computer. The SP-4 came by on Saturday morning and we mounted the two new antennas and ran the cables. He used the software I'd installed to set up the ICOM radio and it was coming in loud and clear.

Our designation was Unit 12 and our check-in time was 12 minutes past the hour and 18 minutes before the hour. I still had my chores to do so while I was stoking and shoveling, Sue would stand by the OP. The rest of the day, I covered the window and she sewed. Seems that my wife took orders for 2 custom quilts, king-sized with the purchaser specifying the pattern at \$1,800, each. With this travel pass situation, there really wasn't a lot of traffic on US 54. Furthermore, I got the impression that the Sheriff's office was much more interested in inbound traffic than outbound traffic.

I forgot to note why the Sgt. knew so much about what was going on at our little homestead. He said they patrolled and I assumed they were using the HMMWVs, but they were using helicopters instead, OH-58D Kiowa Warriors. I guess maybe we have 2 in the area because the President was here.

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I discussed inviting the Sgt. and some of his men out for Christmas. Sue said to do it and I went back in town to talk to the Sergeant. His men and he were getting 4 days off at Christmas to run down to Bliss and spend Christmas with their families. That made my invitation second best and I didn't say anything. I thanked him for getting us set up with the radio and Neighborhood Watch. I suggested he come by and have a Bud when he had the time. Ft. Bliss is south of Alamogordo and stretches all the way to El Paso.

Do you know how the concept of Neighborhood Watch got started? The current system of neighborhood watches began developing as a response to the rape and murder of Kitty Genovese in Queens, New York. People became outraged that three dozen witnesses did nothing to save Genovese or to apprehend her killer. Some locals formed groups to watch over their neighborhoods and to look out for any suspicious activity in their areas. The story of Genovese's murder became an almost-instant parable about the supposed callousness, or at least apathy to others' plight, of either New York City or urban America in general. Much of this framing of the event came in reaction to an investigative article in the New York Times written by journalist Martin Gansberg and published on March 27, 1964, two weeks after the murder. The article bore the thrilling headline, *Thirty-Eight Who Saw Murder Didn't Call the Police*; the public view of the story crystallized around a quote from the last line of the article, taken from an unidentified 70-year-old neighbor: *I didn't want to get involved*. The story was more fiction than fact as the trial of the killer later proved. It did, however, form the basis for the Neighborhood Watch program.

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Sorry, I wander. It wasn't difficult to set up a routine, especially since I was piling the manure and not spreading it. We had plenty of hay and straw and Sue wanted me to keep the barn clean. I can just imagine what it's going to be like where she brings home those pigs. Sue and I talked it over and decided we'd better cover our behinds by keeping an observation log. She said to keep it in a Composition Book in ink so no one could later claim we altered the record. I think she's sometimes a little paranoid. When she produced the new book and a dozen ballpoints, I began to wonder if she was writing down all of my transgressions.

I never got the manure rototilled into the garden either. You may recall that Sue had me moving sandbags and then painting. Somehow, it doesn't seem fair because making quilts is her hobby. She spends most of the day sewing and I have to do chores and maintain the neighborhood watch. Let me tell you, shoveling manure is NOT my hobby. Neither is stoking the furnace or hauling the ashes. I'm not a farmer or a rancher, but you couldn't tell it by looking. I think the reason that cowboy boots have high heels is so you don't step so deep in the cow manure.

I didn't tell you? Sue bought me 2 pairs of Laredo ankle zip boots, one for every day and one for going to meeting/town. That didn't really seem fair; you can tell a real cowboy from a want-to-be by looking at his boots and his sunburned face. Real cowboys probably don't wear Laredo ankle zip boots either, but it's hard to tell just looking.

When I think back, things would have probably been ok if the Sheriff hadn't advertised the neighborhood Watch Program. The problem was it put the bad guys on notice that at select places, not identified, there were people with radios keeping an eye on the area. That had, in my humble opinion, the effect of making everyone a watcher to be feared and possibly dealt with.

There have always been bad guys. In my lifetime, much of it seemed to center on the trade in illicit drugs. For whatever reason, these people seem to be drawn to a lifestyle that involves a lot fast cash. When we have an event like this Chinese attack, either their source of supply or their market or both, seem to dry up. These people are the worst kind of survivors. They've learned to avoid work and law enforcement and they rule by the gun. They don't seem to have any trouble getting whatever they want, be it AK-47s or M16 rifles, although I hear their favorite weapon is the 9mm pistol. When TSHTF, those that manage to survive have to resort to stealing for provisions. In my experience, they prefer to not leave witnesses.

Sue and I never found out much about the 3 guys we were forced to kill way back when and the Army handled the second bunch. You might think having a heavy machinegun was overkill, but we did have quite a bit to protect, thanks to Sue's forward thinking. As I pointed out, we weren't what you call over prepared. We had some things and fortunately the means to get some others. Then when Sue started selling quilts, we finally had a source of income. The prices she was charging was about the price the quilts would have brought before the balloon went up, \$1,500 for a king-sized quilt. If she had adjusted for inflation, the quilts would have been worth \$3-4 thousand. But she had to

ask a price that people could afford; there wasn't a lot of cash around Alamogordo these days.

In times past, many of our goods came from Albuquerque, down I-25 to US 380 over to US 54 and on down to Alamogordo. But Albuquerque had been hit, the same as Phoenix, so these days a lot of the goods came over on US 70 from Roswell or down US 54 from Santa Rosa. We also got a few things up US 54 from Las Cruces. Not that there were a lot of goods, but I was really surprised that they didn't have to ration more. That was the President's idea, rationing.

My Fellow Americans,

The United States has been struck a strong blow by an enemy ½ a world away. I am pleased to report that our ABM system did a fair job in stopping the incoming missiles. I regret to say that some of those missile got through.

While the military and the National Guard attend to cleaning up the cities struck, it will be necessary to impose rationing on select items. I was reminded by one of my advisors that this will be much like the country was during WW II, with rationing of fuel, tires, and limited supplies of food. Rationing is often instituted during wartime for civilians as well. For example, each person may be given ration coupons allowing him or her to purchase a certain amount of a product each month. Rationing will include food and other necessities for which there is a shortage, including materials needed for the recovery effort such as rubber tires, leather shoes, clothing and fuel. FEMA was prepared for such an event and you may register at the County or Parish level to receive you coupon books.

Because of the attack, we were unable to hold elections in November. I have consulted with Congressional Leaders and a National election will be held the 2nd Tuesday in May of 2009, May 13th. Until such time as proper elections can be held, all elected officials will continue in the position to which they were elected. Since before the attack, much of your government has been housed at Holloman AFB in New Mexico. In the coming days, I will move to my ranch in Crawford, and the Vice President to Cheyenne Mountain. Other members of my Cabinet will relocate to Northcom facility at Petersen AFB in Colorado. I have faith in the ability of all Americans to rise above the current calamity and in the coming days, this nation will rebuild.

God Bless America.

The Asian Question – Chapter 18

Anyway that's what he said. My father was young during WW II but he did mention rationing. He said many people put their cars up on blocks to preserve the tires. I assume that public transportation was big in those days or people walked. Rationing will be ok with us, it will allow Sue and I to fill in some of what we use up. Dad said that:

OPA, US federal agency in World War II, established to prevent wartime inflation. The OPA issued (Apr., 1942) a general maximum-price regulation that made prices charged in March 1942, the ceiling prices for most commodities. Ceilings were also imposed on residential rents. These regulations were gradually modified and extended by OPA administrators until almost 90% of the retail food prices were frozen. Prices continued to rise, however, and new drives to secure compliance resulted; ultimately the OPA succeeded in keeping consumer prices relatively stable during the remaining war years. Besides controlling prices, the OPA was also empowered to ration scarce consumer goods in wartime. Tires, automobiles, sugar, gasoline, fuel oil, coffee, meats, butter, cheese and processed foods were ultimately rationed. At the end of the war rationing was abandoned, and price controls were gradually abolished. The agency was finally disbanded in 1947.

FEMA even had posters printed. I guess we were lucky, I didn't see a single one of those *Loose Lips Sink Ships* posters. I never thought I'd live to see the day when you had to have a coupon to buy a pound of sugar or ten gallons of diesel. Unfortunately the United States imported a substantial portion of its petroleum products. In the latter half of the first decade China and the US became the largest importers of oil, forcing the prices much higher. Now with China gone, there was a lot of crude available on the market but the problem was those refineries destroyed in the attack. And, that gets a person right back to talking about California.

There was some good news in the whole thing, unfortunately. With about 20 major metropolitan areas destroyed, the demand for fuel was actually down. The other 4 areas hit were military installations. Sgt. Collins didn't exactly give me a list, he just said 24 areas were hit and later commented that that included 4 military installations. The only ones I know about for sure are San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Phoenix, Albuquerque and Washington, DC. You did notice that the President didn't list the cities hit in the attack either. I guess we don't need to know.

During the winter months, there wasn't a lot of activity for me to report on the Neighborhood Watch. Most of my calls were simply check-in calls. "This is unit 12 at 1412 hours, negative activity," and so forth. All duly noted in the log as per Sue's instructions. Apparently those first two attacks had been opportunists looking for a quick score. We probably over reacted putting in the bulletproof glass and the armor plate, but once Sue started selling quilts, it didn't matter. I did dismantle the M2HB and take it to the range one day just to make sure it worked. I pleased to report that it went thumpa, thumpa just like it was supposed to. Then I had to dismantle it, take it home and clean it.

I only fired one box of ammo because I wasn't certain if Sgt. Collins would replace what I'd used. He not only replaced that box of AP/APIT, he gave me 2 boxes of ball/tracer to practice with. Considering how much work it is to move the machine gun, I wasn't so sure I want to practice again. Between the gun, the tripod and the ammo, we're talking a lot of weight to haul around. The gun weighs 84 pounds and the tripod 44 pounds for a total of 128 pounds before you weigh the ammo. But, I needed to be sure that if push came to shove Sue and I were up to using the Ma Deuce.

To that end, we took the gun, tripod, 2 boxes of practice ammo and a spare barrel over to the range. I fired one box of ammo in short bursts and then swapped the barrel, set the headspace and checked the timing and fired the second box of ammo. While I was doing that, Sue practiced with her M-40, keeping the imagined bad guys away. It's sure a good thing I wore leather gloves, that barrel was very hot.

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Except for the two times we took the Ma Deuce to the range and the other times we took our rifles to practice, this whole routine was rather boring. Day in and day out, shovel coal, eat breakfast, shove manure, shovel more coal, eat lunch, shovel more coal, eat dinner and stand watch until 11 or 12pm when Sue took over. Call in every 30 minutes to tell the Army guys attached to the Sheriff's Department that there was nothing to report.

"Hi, Sgt. Collins what brings you here?"

"Thought maybe I'd take you up on the Bud. I've got a little news, too. With the President gone to Crawford and everyone else moved out, we're returning to Ft. Bliss. I didn't want you to be short on practice ammo so I brought you 4 boxes of ball/tracer mix."

"Come on down to my basement, Sgt. that's where I keep the Bud."

"This is where you sat out after the attack?"

"It was different then, Sergeant, I had an improvised shelter over in that corner around the toilet and shower. I really didn't believe we'd have another nuclear war, so I used the dirt to fill those sandbags and recovered the wood and stored it in the machine shed."

"I take it that you've heard about the election?"

"May 13th."

"They tell us that the vote ought to be confirmed and the Electoral College vote so we can have a new President by the first of June."

"They can do it fast when they want to, huh?"

“Well, Bush has served his two terms and a little extra. He’s declined to endorse John McCain for the Republican Party and it would appear that the Democrats would probably take both Congress and the Executive Branch. Having a nuclear war doesn’t do much to improve a party’s popularity.”

“You can’t really blame the war on Bush, can you?”

“I don’t but I’m equally sure that a majority of the people do. It doesn’t matter if you’re responsible or not if it happens on your watch.”

“I guess it’s sort of gotten that way since WW II, hasn’t it? Didn’t always used to be that way. Lincoln was reelected in 1864 and Franklin Roosevelt didn’t have any trouble getting reelected.”

“True, but Truman sort of set the stage for Eisenhower. I suppose Jack Kennedy would have been reelected, but I’ve always heard that he wanted to pull out of Vietnam.”

“I don’t think so, Sergeant. In an interview with John Bartlow Martin, Robert Kennedy said, “Yeah, but, you know, he’s frequently taken that, those, that line or that position on some of these matters. I don’t think that the fact he has an independent view from the executive branch of the government, particularly in Southeast Asia, indicates that the lines aren’t straight. I, no, I just, I think every. . . . I, the president felt that the. . . . He had a strong, overwhelming reason for being in Vietnam and that we should win the war in Vietnam.”

“We were trying to avoid a Korea, is that correct?”

“Yes, because I, everybody including General MacArthur felt that land conflict between our troops, white troops and Asian, would only lead to, end in disaster. So it was. . . . We went in as advisers, but to try to get the Vietnamese to fight themselves, because we couldn’t win the war for them. They had to win the war for themselves.”

“Well, I just think he was just, Diem wouldn’t make even the slightest concessions. He was difficult to reason with, well, with the. . . . And then it was built up tremendously in an adverse fashion here in the United States and that was played back in Vietnam, and And I think just the people themselves became concerned about it. And so, it began to, the situation began to deteriorate in the spring of 1962, uh, spring of 1963. I think David Halberstam, from the New York Times’ articles, had a strong effect on molding public opinion: the fact that the situation was unsatisfactory. Our problem was that thinking of Halberstam sort of as the Ma – what Matthews [unidentified] did in Cuba, that Batista [Fulgencio R. Batista] was not very satisfactory, but the important thing was to try to get somebody who could replace him and somebody who could keep, continue the war and keep the country united, and that was far more difficult. So that was what was of great concern to all of us during this period of time. Nobody liked Diem particularly, but how to get rid of him and get somebody that would continue the war, not split

the country in two, and therefore lose not only the war but the country. That was the great problem.”

“So would Kennedy have fallen into the Vietnam quagmire just as Johnson did? No one can be sure, and Kennedy supporters can certainly believe that he would have avoided Johnson's massive commitment – even though he had the same advisors as Johnson and the same desire to prevent a Communist takeover. However, the Oliver Stone version of the Kennedy assassination, as expressed in the movie JFK, holds that Kennedy had already decided to pull out of Vietnam, and was killed for that reason. That's just not so.”

“You may be right Mr. Ryan, I wasn't there and I have no idea.”

“Care for another Bud, Sergeant?”

“I have to be going. Come out to the HMMWV and get those 4 ammo boxes of .50 caliber. If I happen to get back up this way again, I'll try to get you some more, but no promises.”

I lugged the ammo and sat it in the living room next to the Ma Deuce. There are 100 rounds in a .50 caliber ammunition can. Leastways, that's what it says on the side of the can.

4,000 rounds of AP/APIT plus another 400 of ball/tracer put us in pretty good shape if we had trouble. I thought the AP/APIT was probably too heavy ammunition for the type of vehicles I expected we have to deal with. At least I wasn't aware that any civilians had up armored HMMWVs with a mounted gun. The gun could be a M60, M240, M2HB or possibly an Mk 19. I wasn't aware that anyone had raided armories but like I said before, we weren't getting a lot of news. I did manage to identify, by trial and error, the encoding I needed to monitor the military tactical net. However, you needed an acceptable ID number for your radio and I came up short. SINCGARS has two modes, SC, e.g., single channel and FH, e.g., frequency hopping.

In early February, shortly after the Army returned to Ft. Bliss I made my first report of activity to the Sheriff. “This is unit 12 at 12:23 hours. I have traffic on US 54 about 3 miles north of US 70.”

“Acknowledged, Unit 12, say number of vehicles and description.”

“Unit 12. Four late model club cab pickups pulling trailers. Each vehicle appeared filled to capacity with people. Unable to identify any weapons and we'll stand by our weapons in case they attack.”

“Roger Unit 12. Maintain a defensive posture, response on the way.”

“Sue, load the Ma Deuce with the ball/tracer mix. I notified Neighborhood Watch dispatch and a response is on the way.”

“It figures, Barry, the Army pulled out.”

“They didn’t seem to notice our place, maybe we’ll get lucky.”

Members of a Neighborhood Watch aren’t peace officers and standing rules prohibit our engaging anyone we report except in self-defense. It never occurred to me that the Sheriff might intercept those 4 pickups and they flee back the way they came. Nonetheless we were ready if necessary. In 9 out of 10 situations use of an automatic weapon is totally unnecessary. The sole exception might be when you’re seriously outnumbered and the situation turns into a kill or be killed scenario. While the Sheriff’s office had the capacity to call up choppers from Ft. Bliss, they couldn’t reply quickly, my best guess was that it was 100 miles, give or take.

The real advantage to the SINCGARS was that in the FH mode the bad guys couldn’t listen in with scanners. The Sheriff has a permanent roadblock on the north side of Tularosa and it suddenly became clear that we weren’t the only members of the Neighborhood Watch who were armed. I turned on my scanner to listen to the police calls and between it and the SINCGARS was trying to follow the action just down the road. That was the first I’d heard of any Otero County Militia. It was Sheriff Blansett giving the orders personally (he doesn’t look anything like Willem Defoe).

And that raised another interesting question, SINCGARS were 28-volt radios, how did the Sheriff adapt them to work in the police vehicles? Who knows, maybe a second alternator and 28-volt battery, this wasn’t the time to be worrying about details. Back to the main issue, why weren’t we informed there was a militia? It’s fair to say that Sue and I were probably armed as well as any of the militia members. That is unless the military handed out M16A2s and 40mm grenades. But you’d have thought if that had happened, Sgt. Collins would have equipped us.

This wasn’t working well, either, the radios were in the OP Center the upstairs front bedroom and the Ma Deuce was directly below on the first floor. That Spec 4 who set the radio up said it was capable of acting as a repeater but he didn’t offer us any of those new handi-talkies the military uses. And he didn’t tell me if the radio would act as a repeater for the little radios either.

“Unit 12, Sheriff Blansett. They spotted the roadblock and are headed your way.”

The Asian Question – Chapter 19

“Sheriff, Unit 12. Message received. We’re manning the machine gun.”

“Sue, they’re coming. You be the gunner and I’ll feed the ammo.”

“I loaded it with ball and tracer, Barry.”

“That’s just fine, they only have pickups.”

“Is that one of them?”

“Looks like, let ‘em have it.”

Sue was thumbing the trigger mechanism sending out short bursts. She riddled that pickup, it burst into flames and I can only assume she hit the gas tank. The pickup slid to a halt crossways in the road, essentially forming a roadblock right in front of our place.

“Where’s the second truck?”

“Darned if I know, you’d better get to the OP and limber up the M-40. I stay here and try to manage the Ma Deuce by myself.”

Those bad guys were really screwed. We had the road blocked in front of our place and the militia, Sheriff or whomever was closing in from the rear. The bad guys were left with 2 choices, neither good. They chose to go north rather than try to go up against a heavy machinegun. I don’t know how you measure adrenaline levels but mine was so high I was shaking. I needed a Bud. But until the sheriff had the situation under control, we needed to remain alert. I moved to the OP where Sue took the right side I took the left. I thought about that a moment and we switched. She had the M-40 while I had my M1A. If we hadn’t switched, I’d have peppered her with brass in a firefight.

They cornered those guys about a mile north and we got a radio call to stand down. I clear the M1A and head for the basement to settle my nerves. Surprisingly, Sue joined me. I guess she wanted her annual can of beer.

“Honey, we have a little problem. Those FRS radios are ok for communication here on the ranch but we need to be able to communicate with the Sheriff. He mainly uses the police radios and while we can pick them up on the scanner, we can’t communicate.”

“All of those Motorola radios are the same, why don’t we buy a couple and get the Sheriff to put in the correct frequencies.”

“Really, what does the Sheriff use?”

“He uses the Motorola CP 200 portables and CM 300 mobiles, which are 16 or 32-channel radios. We’d need a mobile for the OP and one for the truck. We could set the CP 200s up with the Ear Microphone System (EMS) with Voice Activated/PTT Interface.”

“Fine, but, we’ll ask first.”

We were both right and wrong; the Sheriff’s Department recommended the Motorola Tetra radio, models MTH800 handheld and MTM800 mobile. It was big in Europe and making headway in the US. It couldn’t be simple; we needed 2 sets of radios, the Tetra and the CP/CM radios. Not that it mattered, Sue had done well on the quilts and just for once in our lives we deserved the better communications gear. More stuff to hang on our ALICE gear.

Voice activated mikes wouldn’t work when we were using more than one radio. We picked out the earpieces that featured the PTT (push to talk) switch. The inside of my pickup was beginning to look like a police car. I had a CB radio, MTM800 and CM300. If they’d just get the phones back up life could have been much easier.

On January 20, 2009, the now acting President addressed the nation:

My Fellow Americans,

As of noon today, my term of office expired. I will continue in my position as your acting President until a successor is selected on May 13th. I bring you this message from Colorado Springs tonight. My purpose is to tell you the state of our nation.

Shortly after the attack on our beloved country members of our armed forces conducted an informal census. I shall share the results with you tonight. Your government has assessed the current availability of food, fuel, medical care, shelter and other necessities so necessary to life. I shall share the results of those assessments with you tonight.

Immediately following the attack, I was forced to suspend Posse Comitatus. Existing laws, including Title 10, Chapter 15 commonly known as The Insurrection Act, and The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act Title 42, Chapter 68, grant the your President broad powers that may be invoked in the event of domestic emergencies, including an attack against the Nation using weapons of mass destruction, and these laws specifically authorize the President to use the Armed Forces to help restore public order. As of noon today, Posse Comitatus has been restored. Henceforth, our military will support the nation but will no longer be used in a law enforcement capacity. Their attention will turn to aiding in the recovery.

NORAD identified 154 weapons used to attack our country. Of these, all but 24 failed to reach their targets, having been successfully intercepted by our ABM umbrella consisting of Patriot-3 and THAAD missiles. Four military installation and 20 metropolitan areas were successfully targeted by the People Republic of China. These include: New York,

Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Diego, Dallas, San Antonio, Detroit, San Jose, Indianapolis, San Francisco, Albuquerque, Austin, Baltimore, Milwaukee, Boston, Seattle and our nation's Capital, Washington, DC. Due to the radioactive fallout, it is impossible to determine the actual loss of life. Our census estimates that it exceeds 30 million.

The circumstances that lead to the attack came about when the Republic of China, the island nation of Taiwan, declared Independence from the People's Republic of China on August 1 last year. No doubt Taiwan hoped to take advantage of the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. The People's Republic of China acted predictably and began a missile attack on Taiwan, followed up with action by its Naval Forces to reclaim Taiwan.

The position of my administration was to support Democracy and when President Chen Shui-bian of Taiwan asked for our assistance, I sent the Seventh Fleet in response. Resulting actions in the area apparently compelled the Peoples Republic to launch nuclear weapons against our fleet. All incoming warheads were intercepted although one weapon was only deflected resulting in damage to the Kitty Hawk Carrier Strike Group. Our Naval Forces have now been repositioned in a total blockade of our eastern and western coasts.

There exist adequate supplies of food and fuel to see the country through this winter. High priority has been given, and protection provided to, convoys of these essential supplies. In those instances where our normal distribution system has been disrupted road and rail transportation are being employed to distribute vital supplies. As you know, we have implemented temporary rationing. Although there are indications of minor shortages, your government is working with all haste to insure that those bottlenecks are eliminated everyone has food on their table and all necessary supplies made available.

Throughout the United States there is adequate housing available for our population. Temporary relocation centers are available but continue to be closed, as more permanent housing is located for our citizens. Medical services are limited in some areas but adequate care is available for every person in need of care.

During the 8 years I served as your President, this country has been engaged by forces from without to bring down our form of government and our people. That began on September 11, 2001 and resulted in our engaging in conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Representative governments have replaced the despotic leaderships of both countries. Is our world more secure today than it was 10 years ago? It will be, if it isn't. As we rebuild this great nation of ours let us resolve to maintain the Democratic Republic envisioned by our founding fathers. We will succeed.

God Bless America.

"He sounds like he's making it sound better than it is."

“Sue, the thing that really po’s me is that they finally get TV up and running and the first program they broadcast is George W. Bush trying to explain away what happened.”

“I still don’t know what happened. Did the US retaliate on China for attacking our fleet or did China attack the US when its attack on our fleet failed?”

“Offhand I’d say it was one of the above.”

“Well, it doesn’t make any sense. If their attack on our fleet failed, they could have waited to see how we’d respond. What did China have to gain by making a first strike on the United States? No leader in his right mind could have possibly thought that we wouldn’t respond to an attack. Even school children know that the US is the most powerful nation in the world. I have to believe that we still are, Barry. It’s changing the subject, but what did you learn about the Otero County Militia?”

“Not much, I think that’s just the name they gave to the neighborhood Watch program.”

“We’re going to town tomorrow and get our food and fuel rations.”

“Did we get coupons to replace the fuel for the generator?”

“We have coupons for enough food for the two of us and 10 gallons per week, is all.”

“Near as I can tell, we’ve burned a little over 2,500-gallons of diesel keeping the generator running. I wouldn’t want to run out if they’re not going to get the electricity back on.”

“Run out? How are we going to run out? We started out with 8,000-gallons. If you’re right on our usage, we still have 5,500-gallons.”

“I’m right on our usage, we emptied the 1,000-gallon tank and have used about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the 2,000-gallon tank. Although the tanks were all plumbed together, each had a shutoff valve so I turned off all but one tank at a time.”

“It’s been 5 months, I’d imagine that they’ll have the power on soon.”

“Yeah, me too.”

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If you’re familiar with the Alamogordo area, you know there is a large military presence. White Sands Missile Range, located west of White Sands National Monument 47 miles from Alamogordo, is the premier test range in the world. The Army installation range is committed to testing for government agencies, the Department of Defense and both private entities and foreign countries. The Range covers two million acres (3,200 square miles). The Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS), Patriot, Army Tactical Missile Sys-

tem and the Theater High Altitude Area Defense system (THAAD) are tested at the range on a regular basis.

Holloman Air Force Base and White Sands Missile Range work hand in hand in that for safety reasons Holloman Air Force Base controls the air space above White Sands. Holloman Air Force Base became home to the world's only wing of F-117A Stealth fighters in 1990 when then US Defense Secretary Dick Cheney proposed that the wing be moved from Tonopah Test Range in Nevada. The 9,200-acre base is located west of Alamogordo.

The F-117A Nighthawk, the Stealth fighter, is the plane that played such a major role in the Persian Gulf War. Three squadrons regularly fly the Stealth above the White Sands Missile Range. Other squadrons at the base fly the F-4F Phantom II and the T-38A Talon, which are a part of the 49th Fighter Wing. The 46th Test Group at Holloman manages the ten mile-long, high-speed test track—the longest, most precisely surveyed and best instrumented track in the world. The Test Group also operates a Global Positioning Systems test bed, radar signature test platform, and is developing a Magnetic Levitation (MagLev) track.

The German Air Force Flying Training Center (GAF FTC) contingent at Holloman Air Force Base currently consists of 680 military personnel plus families. The program is structured to train German Air Force pilots to fly TORNADO Fighter Aircraft.

Navy facilities include the USS Desert Ship. The Desert Ship serves as a primary live fire test bed for today's surface-to-air weapons including Standard Missile and Evolved Seasparrow Missile (ESSM). The Desert Ship is continually being upgraded to meet live fire testing requirements. The Desert Ship has tested all versions of Standard Missile (SM) including Tartar, Terrier and Aegis variants of SM-1 and SM-2, Seasparrow, Sealance, and Vertical Launched AntiSubmarine Rocket (VL ASROC). Testing is performed at sites other than the Desert Ship.

The Navy's Launch Complex 34 (LC34) is the land-based test site for the Rolling Airframe Missile (RAM). LC34 is a semi-hardened facility, which can be used in self-defense and close-in engagements. Lot acceptance tests for both US and NATO rounds have been conducted at this site. The Navy's research rocket program supports a variety of government and commercial firms in the launch and recovery of suborbital payloads. Payloads include Theater Missile Defense countermeasures experiments, advanced technology demonstrations, and targets to support testing of theater missile defense systems. The low cost ballistic target alternative supports requirements where low to medium fidelity is acceptable.

And to the south is Ft. Bliss, TX, which adjoins the White Sands Missile Range. It is the home of the US Army Air Defense Artillery Center. Ft. Bliss is the Army's largest training center in the United States. This provides the Installation Commander with a distinct advantage in conducting all of the Mobilization Missions he has been assigned by FORSCOM and TRADOC: Deployment of all Army Air Defense Assets, Mobilization and

Deployment of numerous large scale, priority Reserve Component Units, CONUS Replacement Center operations and Training Base Expansion.

The Asian Question – Chapter 20

Living where we do, we're basically surrounded by the military. It didn't hurt one little bit that Holloman had that Executive Shelter, it meant that we got protected. So naturally, the only problems we had to deal with were a major supply shortage and an occasional bad guy. I'll tell what I think they should do with the bodies of the bad guys that were killed. They ought to string them on sections of fence around the area with a sign that says, "Bad Guys Not Welcome. Your Place Is Reserved."

Instead, we have a Neighborhood Watch. Wouldn't it be better to prevent forest fires than to put them out? It's ok; it gave me something to do besides shovel. The last time we were in Alamogordo, I picked up one of the little under counter refrigerators and started to keep a couple of six-packs in the OP, a six-pack of Coke Classic and a six-pack of Bud. I don't drink when I have the duty.

Sue got very tired of staying up at night to watch and with Rex, we decided that it wasn't necessary, he must hear those cars coming from a mile away. New Mexico is famous for its mineral resources including uranium ore, manganese ore, potash, salt, perlite, copper ore, beryllium, and tin concentrates. Cattle and dairy products top the list of major animal products of New Mexico. Major crops include hay, nursery stock, pecans, and chili peppers. Hay and sorghum top the list of major dryland crops. Farmers also produce onions, potatoes, and dairy products. New Mexico specialty crops include piñon nuts, pinto beans and chilies.

It's a real shame about Albuquerque; about ¼ of the population of New Mexico lived there, with the population higher in the winter due to those snowbirds. But it was early in the year when the Chinese attacked, so I don't suppose many of them had shown up yet. I suppose that same thing applied to Phoenix, the snowbirds usually began showing up after the hot weather was gone, usually late September or early October.

Sitting there looking out the window with nothing happening, I began to consider the President's speech. It was awfully short, for one thing. You'd think the State of the Nation Speech would take more than what was probably a single page of text. Twenty metropolitan areas? Which military installations? Why didn't we have more PAC-3/THAAD systems in place and intercept all of the incoming weapons? I suppose it was because they'd had their share of troubles developing THAAD. If they'd done it the simple way like the Russians had by getting the missile close and exploding a nuke they wouldn't have had near the problems they had with a kinetic weapon. Go figure, probably afraid they'd create too much EMP.

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I'm not a philosopher, but it seems to me that the elected officials in the US spend a lot of time being politicians and very little time representing their constituents. With the war, I'll bet a lot of the liberals won't get back to Congress. I miss Ronald Reagan.

There was one smart politician; he ended the Cold War by bankrupting the Russians. We didn't need a 600 ship Navy, which was a plan put forth as a campaign plank by Reagan in 1980 to rebuild the US Navy to its former size after post-Vietnam cutbacks. It was one of the ideas to rebuild the whole armed forces. The program included:

- Recommissioning the Iowa-class battleships.
- Keeping older ships in service longer.
- A large new construction program.

Under Reagan, the first of the Ohio-class SSBN was completed. Construction on the Nimitz-class of super carriers and Los Angeles-class subs were dramatically stepped up. The revolutionary, new Aegis combat system was installed on the up-and-coming Ticonderoga-class cruisers, production of which was also stepped up. And the Iowa-class battleships were all recommissioned and refitted with Harpoon, Tomahawk and CIWS system capabilities. The first Harpoons, the first Tomahawks, and the AGM-88 HARM missiles all debuted on the navy's ships. Naval aviation was stepped up with the introduction of the F/A-18 Hornet, along with improved versions of the EA-6 Prowler electronic countermeasure aircraft, the A-6 Intruder and the F-14 Tomcat.

Many of those systems were gone now, 3 battlewagons permanently retired and 1 in inactive reserve. The Super Hornet replaced the Tomcat and they had been planning on the next generation of fighter, the F-35. It had 3 variants:

F-35A – Multi-role conventional takeoff (CTOL) fighter based on the X-35A but with a slightly lengthened fuselage and modified tail surfaces, developed for the US Air Force and equipped with an internal gun, infrared sensors, and a laser designator; USAF plans to buy 1,736 but announced in December 2004 that this total will be reduced.

F-35B – Multi-role short takeoff and vertical landing (STOVL) fighter based on the X-35B intended for the US Marines, UK Royal Navy, and UK Royal Air Force and equipped with a lift fan located in an enlarged spine behind the cockpit, an external gun pod rather than a fixed internal gun, and smaller internal bays; USMC had planned to buy 609 but this total has been cut almost in half while plans to purchase 60 for the RN and 90 for the RAF are also under review.

F-35C – Multi-role carrier variant (CV) fighter based on the X-35C and similar to the F-35A but with larger wings for increased fuel capacity plus slats as well as larger horizontal tails and control surfaces for better low-speed landing performance, strengthened structure and landing gear for carrier landings, and removal of the internal cannon in favor of an optional gun pod on the centerline station; Navy plans to buy 480 have been scaled back to about 370.

It didn't look to me like we'd be seeing the F-35 anytime soon. When the Chinese attacked the 3 models were still in flight-testing. Sue seemed to think that the government would rush to replace all of its aging airframes and might even order more of the F-22 Raptor. If the Air Force, Marines and Navy get new airplanes, I'll bet the Army will be

looking for the next generation Abrams tank. The more things change, the more they stay the same. But, I'm not sure about the F-22, you could buy two of the F-35s for what one of those cost. Originally, the estimated cost was \$89 million per. It had risen to more than \$200 million per.

Just because a weapons system is old doesn't mean that it's bad. Consider the M1911, the M2HB and the B-52. The Air Force was claiming they were going to continue to fly the B-52 until they were 100 years old. The Army might go for a replacement to the turbine engine in the Abrams. What they needed was something a little more fuel efficient, more durable and just as quiet. If they could improve the horsepower to say 1,800hp, they could recapture some of the power to weight ratio they lost when they increased the weight from 60 to 70 tons. I had heard much in recent years about the scheme to put the Crusader engine in the Abrams tank.

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Began daydreaming for a little bit there, sorry, easy to do with no traffic on the road. I blame that mostly on this fuel rationing. I forgot to tell you, they brought the F-117 Nighthawks back from Nellis. Probably moved them there because they didn't figure the Chinese would target our flying saucers. Anyway, I have the TV on in the background with the sound down low listening to the news while I watch the road. I don't believe I know any of these new reporters, most of the old ones were killed off when the big cities were bombed.

There are a bunch of oddballs, if you ask me. This new generation of reporters seems more interested in creating the news than reporting it. I do recognize one of those guys, Geraldo. After he got his chest in the wringer drawing maps in the sand, he seemed to settle down a little. Did a pretty fair job reporting on Katrina back in '05. The 3 reporters I lost the most respect for out of that deal was Sheppard Smith, Anderson Cooper and Wolf Blitzer. Wolf may think he's Bernard Shaw, but he wasn't fit to wipe the sweat of Bernie's brow. Shep sort of cleaned up his act after, but Cooper and Blitzer gave reporting a bad name.

"Here you go, want chips with that?"

"Lunch time already? I go stoke the furnace after I eat."

"How is our supply of coal holding up?"

"It's going, but we still have 10 cords of firewood. Do you think I should try to get more?"

"Wait until summer. How are we going to refill the diesel tanks if they don't get the electricity back on?"

“We’ll cross that bridge when we switch to the 5,000-gallon tank Sue. To be perfectly honest, I don’t know. If we could find a second generator like the 12.5kw model we have, I’d really be tempted to part with the gold, though.”

“We have the 5kw generator, why would you want another big one?”

“I wouldn’t want to depend on that smaller genset for very long. Running it while I service the big one is fine, but the quality just isn’t there. I doubt we’ll get 3,000-hours out of it before the motor is worn out.”

“We could always get another diesel tank; he had several on the lot.”

“What good would another 5,000-gallon tank do us if we couldn’t get diesel?”

“He was very cooperative the last time.”

“I believe he was just afraid of a gun toting woman. He seemed to want to sell off whatever he could and get out of town.”

“Call the Sheriff on the radio and tell them you’re going to be off the air for a while. You eat your lunch, stoke the furnace and let’s go in to Alamogordo and see what we can come up with. I’ll dig out a few of those gold coins.”

“Make up a list of what you want to get.”

“I know what I want, a Cummins 12.5 HDCAB; a 5,000-gallon diesel tank; and, 7,500-gallons of diesel fuel.”

“Might be easier to get a M1A2SEP than those things.”

“What’s that?”

“The latest version of the Abrams tank.”

“Don’t forget that if you can get the diesel, you’re going to need PRI-D, PRI-Flow and PRI-Ocide.”

“If we had been smart, we would have bought all of those things before the war.”

“Who knew? I didn’t really think that the Chinese would go to war during the Olympics and I was surprised that the Taiwanese took just that moment to declare Independence. If you had asked me, Sue, I would have told you the greatest threat was another terrorist attack.”

“I that why you never worried about building a shelter?”

“The way I looked at it, if we were ever attacked and they hit Holloman, we were toast. Otherwise, I assumed we didn’t have anything to worry about.”

“We should still have a shelter. Maybe the dealer has a large used fuel tank that we could clean out and bury.”

“I don’t understand, who would attack the US now, especially after what we did to China and North Korea?”

“Since the war, we have been attacked 3 times. Three times, Barry and we were just lucky. What would happen if you put in a call to the Sheriff’s Department for backup and they were off somewhere else handling another problem? Would the 2 of us be able to stand off a large force with that machinegun and a few rifles? And, don’t tell me that we’ll cross that bridge when we come to it.”

I could see right off that Sue was testy. There are some times a man has to stand up for what he thinks and others where the only wise decision is to let his wife spend the gold she got from selling quilts. I’m sure I don’t need to tell you which one of those times this was. I could almost hear the bee buzzing in her bonnet.

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“Of course I have fuel, do you have ration coupons?”

“Not for as much as we want, no.”

“Well then, that’s a horse of a different color. Say, I remember you, you’re the lady who wanted 5,000-gallons of diesel and didn’t want to pay the going price. How would you expect me to cover a shortage of 7,500-gallons without coupons? You said it wouldn’t always be the day after Armageddon. Well, it’s six months after Armageddon and we have fuel rationing.”

“I need another 5,000-gallon tank, too,” Sue said undeterred. “When the government instituted rationing, they also instituted price controls, didn’t they?”

“Yes, so what?”

“So, say I was willing to pay you the \$4 a gallon you asked last time?”

The Asian Question – Chapter 21

“Lady the penalties for violating the rationing laws are pretty severe.”

“\$4.25.”

“I could go to jail for several years.”

“\$4.50.”

“\$4.75.”

“Do you take gold?”

“\$1,200 an ounce.”

“\$1,800.”

“Spit the difference?”

“Sure, bring the tank and the fuel around tomorrow morning and I have the gold ready for you. Same price on the tank, \$4,000?”

“Yeah, no one is buying tanks because they can’t get fuel.”

“You sell a lot of it at \$4.75 a gallon?”

“I usually get \$5, but you carry guns. Anything else you need?”

“4 gallons of PRI-D, 4 gallons of PRI-Flow and 2 gallons of PRI-Ocide. You don’t have a really large used tank do you?”

“How large?”

“Big, we want to use it as a shelter.”

“Say 30’ long and 8’ in diameter?”

“Do you have one that size?”

“Yes, can you afford it?”

“I don’t know that until you tell me how much.”

“\$12,000.”

“We’ll pass. We can get a 40’ section of corrugated culvert 10’ in diameter for \$8,000.”

“If you can find it.”

“We stopped there before we stopped here. Thanks but no thanks.”

“I’ll match the \$8,000. If you buy a culvert you’ll have to put on end plates, etc.”

“But if this is a used fuel tank, won’t it stink and be filthy?”

“We steam clean them and inspect them for leaks when we buy them. I do have one just the size you want that has an access hatch.”

“I don’t know. 7,500-gallons at \$4.75 a gallon is \$35 grand, plus another \$4 grand for the tank. Then there are the PRI-Products at \$75 a gallon. We’re talking \$40,000 here.”

“I’ll throw in the PRI products like I did the last time.”

“Last time you only want \$4 a gallon for the fuel and I’m sure this is the same diesel fuel you had then. Right?”

“Yes, but...”

“So, you’re basically doubling the price of the fuel simply because we don’t have coupons, right?”

“I told you that I could...”

“I’d be willing to give you \$4 a gallon for the fuel, accept the free PRI products and pay you \$4 and \$8 grand for those two tanks. Think about it, that’s 28 gold Eagles.”

“30 or it’s been nice talking to you.”

“Deal.”

“What?”

“I said I agree.”

“Oh. We’ll be by in the morning with the two tanks and the fuel. How do I know you have 30 gold Eagles?”

“Do you want to count them now?”

“Just show them to me.”

“Here.”

“See you tomorrow.”

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“How big is than tank Sue?”

“I calculated it and its 1,508ft³ and there are 7.48 gallons per ft³, so about 11,280-gallons. Listen, Barry, let’s see about the generator and then something to store the second generator underground to power the shelter and act as a backup to the primary generator.”

“Help you?”

“We want a Cummins 12.5 HDCAB generator.”

“I might have one, say for \$12,000.”

“\$10,000 gold. That’s my only offer. I don’t need it, it’s just a spare, so don’t go thinking you can hold us up because we’re desperate.”

“Geez, lady, don’t get your water hot.”

“Do you have one?”

“As a matter of fact, I do, \$12,000.”

“\$10,000, including tax. If you still have it that means that no one is willing to buy it. Colorado Standby’s price was \$8,645. If they can sell it for that, so can you. Even with tax, it only comes to \$9,272.”

“I don’t know lady, someone might want it at \$12,000.”

“Barry, this man is a thief. Let’s go turn him in for price gouging. He must not know that there are price controls in place.”

“Yes, dear.”

“Wait.”

“Why should I, you can go to jail for price gouging.”

“I’ve already been warned. Alright, \$9,272.”

“We need 4 fuel filters, 48 oil filters and 12 cases of oil.”

“How much are you going to pay me for those?”

“Just what they’re worth, \$1,003.86 including tax.”

“Why do I feel like I’ve been robbed?”

“Think in terms of me not bringing you cookies at the jail.”

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“Geez, Sue, what’s gotten into you?”

“Men! They think just because you’re a woman, they can push you around. I won’t have any man treat me any differently than he’d treat another man.”

“Ladies and Gentlemen, may I now introduce Miss Calamity Jane Canary!”

“She was just ahead of her time, that’s all. You watch it or you’ll be sleeping on the couch.”

“Bud time!”

“When we get home, you stoke the furnace. Then if you want a Bud, that’s fine with me. Besides, you’re going to need to stay up all night.”

“Why?”

“Because I don’t trust that Chevron dealer and he knows we have 30 pieces of gold to pay for the tanks and the fuel. After he’s got everything delivered and leaves, I want you to go to town and spend our last silver on ammo for the Ma Deuce.”

“Are we out of gold?”

“No way, we’re out, but it would be very nice knowing that people think we spent the last of our money on fuel, a generator and more ammo. They might be less inclined to try and get what we have, especially if they know we have lots of .50 caliber ammo.”

“Sneaky. Sure, I’ll see if I can buy up some of the .50 caliber that the Army gave to other people who bought Ma Deuces from that guy.”

“What are we going to do with all of our illegal weapons when things settle down? If the Democrats take over Congress and the White House, it won’t be long before even BB-guns are illegal.”

“You bought a shelter even though I don’t believe we need it. We can store our stuff there. It might be a good place to store your cedar chest, too.”

“If that tank has an access port, we can lay it on its side and extend the hole with a piece of pipe that’s the same size. We can run that into a concrete box and a pipe up to ground level.”

“How deep are we going to bury the tank?”

“If we bury it 9’ deep, we’ll have a protection factor of 10 to the 96/16th power.”

“Sixth power, Sue. The power number tells you the number of zeroes and 6 zeroes is 1,000,000. Where are we going to put the genset?”

“In the concrete box I mentioned.”

“I’ll arrange for someone to come dig a hole, tunnel and smaller hole. I’ll look around for some metal pipe and something we can use for a ladder to get down into the generator room.”

To tell the truth, I figured when I let her spend her money like that, I get some loving. I quickly lost that illusion when she mentioned the couch. Sue was right, in the six months since the end of our world, we’d flashed a bit of gold. Of course the gold I’d spent was on a Ma Deuce so people might think twice about trying to get our gold. Having them think that we’d gone on a buying spree and had spent all of the gold and were down to our last silver was even better. Fortunately we could convert the gold and silver to cash money, if necessary. The guy charged a small percentage, but not everyone wanted gold or silver. That was just plain stupid if you asked me, which you didn’t.

If gold had gone from \$350 to \$1,500 an ounce in a short span of years, it could just as easily fall back to \$350 or even lower, though I doubted it. Not in our lifetime! Maybe I ought to see about getting a couple of those M16A1/M203s, magazines and 40mm grenades the guy was now carrying. Sue should go along and she can tell the world that we’re out of money! I’m not a very good liar. He was asking \$1,000 each for the rifles and M203s, \$5 each for the grenades and \$250 a case of 1,000-rounds of 5.56×45mm. I have to give the guy credit, if nothing else he was bold about what he sold. Hmm, \$2,000 per weapon and ammo on top of it, I suppose that we’d better buy plenty. He never seems to have ammo when you want more.

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She was wrong about the Chevron man or my having the lights on all night scared him off. It was a small price to pay to keep us safe. Rex lay down next to my table and kept me company. He’s full size and I can tell you I wouldn’t want to have him mad at me.

The Asian Question – Chapter 22

“We’d like 2 M16A3 rifles, 2 M203s 10,000 rounds of 5.56x45mm and 144 of those grenades.”

“That Ma Deuce I sold you work out ok?”

“Just like new.”

“Maybe that’s because it was brand new, do you think?”

“I’d really like to get more ammo for it. I can’t ask the Army because they went back to Ft. Bliss.”

“I’m selling it for \$500 a crate of 2 cans.”

“That’s \$2.50 around!”

“Maybe, but it is a seller’s market.”

“Ok, 10 crates, if you can handle it plus what I mention earlier.”

“You do seem to have a lot of gold.”

“THAT’S THE LAST OF THE GOLD!” Sue all but shouted. “It just about finishes off our silver, too. We want 10 magazines per rifle. What’s that all come to?”

“Let me add it up: 4 times \$1,000 plus 10 times \$250 plus \$5 times 144 plus 10 times \$500. That is a total of, uh, \$12,220. Divided by \$1500 equals 8.146667 ounces of gold.”

“Fine we’ll give you our last Eagles and remaining silver. Will you accept cash for the rest?”

“I suppose. Cash isn’t as good a deal though.”

“Ok, our 8 last gold Eagles and our last 12 silver Eagles. That leaves a balance of \$10. All I have is singles, ok?”

“Whatever. Pull your truck up to the door and the boy will bring the stuff out on a cart.”

“SUE! WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO FOR FOOD?”

“Beans and rice, Barry,” she replied loud enough for several people to hear.

“That’s quite the little show the two of you put on at the farmer’s market. Do you really expect anyone to believe it?”

“That’s really hard to say, Deputy. But if they don’t and come by looking for gold, silver, cash or food they’re going to be awfully disappointed. We have just enough money coming from Sue’s quilts to pay for food. She’s making 2 custom quilts, on order, at \$1,800 each.”

“How are the two of you going to handle a Ma Deuce and 2 of the M16s?”

“I don’t really know, start at the top and work our way down, I suppose. Our best bet is the Ma Deuce because nothing resists AP/APIT, even a vest. After that I suppose we’ll switch to 40mm grenades until we run out and then to the .22 rifle.”

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“Do you think they believed us?”

“Too well, the contractor wanted to know how we were going to pay him for digging the hole.”

“What did you tell him?”

“That we’d saved back enough of the silver to pay him. Man, am I tired; I should have tried to get some sleep last night. I turned the lights on and left them on. Rex never stirred so apparently no one came around.”

“If we’re going to maintain that cover story, it’s going to take all of our silver.”

“I figured about half, he wants \$5,000 for digging the hole and setting the tank.”

“It seems strange to be putting in a shelter after WW III, but it will give us someplace to hide if we weren’t believed.”

“Maybe we should orient the tank so I can extend a tunnel from the concrete box to the basement.”

“Do whatever you think is best.”

I gave it some thought and if we set the tank about 20’ from the house, we could have an 8’ run of pipe to the concrete box and another 7’-8’ to the basement wall. That would depend on how I made the box. But, I had to have the same distance from the tank to the box as I had from ground level to the box to prevent radiation from turning the corner. Yeah, like we’re ever going to be nuked a second time! I also had to come up with something to disguise the hole into the basement wall. I could use that set of enclosed shelving, I suppose.

Utah Shelters Systems says that you should fill the hole with the culvert in to midline with rock and the remainder of the way with soil. I had to try and figure out how much rock that would take. Assuming we dug a hole 34' long, 8' deep and 12' wide, the hole would be 3,264ft³. Now, if I subtract the volume of the tank (1,508ft³) from that it leaves 1,752ft³ divided by 2 or 878ft³. If I divide that by 27, it works out to 32.5 yards of rock. Heck, I thought that would be hard to calculate. It didn't matter how deep we buried the tank, the space needing rock was 1,632 minus 754 or 878ft³.

Guess what movie I watched on guard duty that night?

Close Encounters of the First Kind: This is a simple encounter that occurs when seeing a strange object at a distance from a few hundred feet all the way down to a few yards. In this type encounter, there is no interaction with the environment. There aren't any scorched earth or trees; nothing remains can be collected or measured.

Close Encounters of the Second Kind: This is an encounter that meets the criteria of CE1 but the object leaves some type of evidence. Broken tree limbs, scorched earth, and a barren patch of lawn where grass does not grow for a long time are just a few types of interactions UFOs have been reported to have with their surroundings.

Close Encounters of the Third Kind: This is a sighting where occupants are seen in or around the craft. Sounds simple enough, but these are the sightings that are among the most intriguing.

That explains how Spielberg came up with the title. Dr. J. Allen Hynek, long time official Project Blue Book consultant and founder of the Center for UFO Studies, coined not only the phrase, but also a system to classify different types of close encounters with UFOs. This system served as Spielberg's origin for the film. Dr. Hynek even had a small role at the end of the movie. He appears sporting his trademark Van Dyke peering into the landed mothership, with a look in his eye that says, "I knew they were real".

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I hadn't stayed up all night and instead went to bed when the movie ended. I wanted to watch the next movie, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. Fair to good movie, but the old SciFi flick that was most interesting was Gene Barry's version of *War of the Worlds*. In the former, the American authorities were worried about an aircraft moving 4,000 miles per (obviously the Aurora experimental aircraft). Turned out to be Michael Rennie and a robot (Lock Martin who stood 7'7" tall). In case you're still curious, the expression is "Klaatu barada nikto". Patricia O'Neal has admitted in interviews that she was completely unaware during the filming that the film would turn out so well and become one of the great science-fiction classics of all time. She assumed it would be just another one of the then-current and rather trashy flying saucer films that were popular at the time, and she found it difficult to keep a straight face while saying her lines.

I almost busted out laughing at the idea of getting all of the World's leaders together in a single setting. I guess if Klaatu came to visit now, we wouldn't have to worry about inviting China. At the end of the movie he warned that if the Earth didn't get its act together, we'd be wiped out, but he didn't say how long we had.

o

At breakfast, there was cereal with toast. The milk sort of tasted funny.

"What's wrong with the milk?"

"Nothing. I made it fresh this morning."

"I miss milk in a bottle."

"To have fresh milk, we'd have to have a cow. You're the one always complaining about shoveling manure so I never brought it up."

"Do you think we could find a pregnant cow to add to our growing herd of animals?"

"The man who sold us the calf told me anytime I wanted a cow to let him know. I didn't bring it up because frankly I'm tired of your complaining."

"What would you think if I connect the new shelter to the basement using an oval culvert?"

"You have to explain that."

"We lay the tank on its side about 20' from the house. We dig a trench from there to the basement wall. Halfway in between we build the concrete box with the ladder to the surface. We cut a hole into the basement wall that we cover with the enclosed shelf. I'll bet that I could mount it to the wall with a heavy piano hinge that would conceal it."

"Are you going to have the excavator fill the hole?"

"I hadn't planned on it, no."

"You'll be shoveling from now until doomsday. We can always explain away the money by claiming I sold a couple extra quilts. I can't see you forming up that box or installing the culverts, maybe we'd better hire it done."

"We should have done all these things before we made the production about being out of money."

"It doesn't matter, Barry. We can do these things on the sly and get the people we hire to promise not to talk about it."

“You have more faith in human nature than I do, Sue.”

“Then you just let me handle it. You have to stay here because they’re coming to excavate today. I run down to Alamogordo and arrange for the cow. We can’t get chicks for a while yet so we won’t worry about that. I’ll find someone to put in the culvert, etc. Have you figured out how much rock you need?”

“Call it 33 yards.”

“I’ll get extra, it couldn’t hurt to put some in around the culvert.”

“Fine, get 40. If there is any left over, we can spread it on the driveway.”

“How much culvert do you need?”

“About 16’ of 6’ oval culvert. I probably should have a bucket of some sort of a sealer, like tar. I have no idea how much concrete the generator room will take. Then we’ll need pipe to connect the new tank and run a line to the new generator. We could put both generators in the generator room and centralize the wiring. That’s going to take an electrician.”

“And it explains why you want a tunnel from the basement. You won’t have to climb down a ladder to service the generators.”

“Honest to God, Sue, that never occurred to me. I just now thought of co-locating the generators. It is actually a good idea; centralize the wiring all in the generator room. I don’t know how big that hatch is in that tank, but I doubt it’s over 2’ in diameter. It going to be tough getting much of anything into the tank so I suppose we have to keep most of our stuff in the basement.”

“You’re assuming that we use the hatch. Is there any reason we couldn’t cut it bigger and put in a door?”

“This is getting complicated.”

“Leave it to me. I’ll work out the details. Rex and you can man the OP and stay out of my way.”

Good advice, I took it. Hauled a couple of six-packs (coke) to the OP and got a nice little rug for Rex to lie on. I’m too old to be playing war games, I just want to relax and have everything back to normal. But no, we had to get in a war with China.

The Asian Question – Chapter 23

For the next week to ten days, our little homestead was a flurry of activity. Sue had the excavator lay the tank on its side with the hole away from the house. I asked and she explained that it was going to be an escape tunnel from the shelter. I quit asking and took a couple of Tylenol. I didn't want to know until it was all done. I wondered how the electrician was going to manage to do all of the wiring, too. Way above my pay grade, to quote Sgt. Collins.

"I had them bury the fuel tanks to protect them."

"Whatever. How are you going to get the fuel out of the tanks?"

"With a pump."

"Show me when it's done. I don't see how I can do a watch when you have trucks coming in at all hours of the day. I hope the guy who sold you the cow taught you how to milk it, I'm drawing the line."

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Provo's Privy has a nice ring to it, Rancher Barry doesn't. The couch is very uncomfortable, but I'm starting to get used to it. If I had to add milking a cow twice a day to my schedule, I wouldn't have a lot of time to watch the road. To top it off, I still haven't had a chance to rototill the garden. I think she felt a little guilty with me being on the couch, she had a guy come in with a power rototiller mounted on the back of a tractor and the garden looked pretty nice. But, I ain't milking no cow.

I didn't realize what her plan was until she had the whole thing done. By the time they finished landscaping, there wasn't any sign of a buried shelter or buried generator room. Sue must have learned to milk, she got the cow and we had fresh milk on the table. Then she offered to show me how to milk, just in case she got sick and couldn't do it. Given the circumstances, I learned. Next thing you know, she's got a headache and would I milk the cow this morning? Marriage is all about compromise, but why does it seem to me that I'm the one doing all of the compromising?

The living room window where we had the Ma Deuce had the storm removed and the upper half of where the storm window went had a piece of that bullet proof glass. To use the machinegun, we open the lower window until it was all the way up. It gave us about a 32" square to shoot out of. And for 4' on either side of the window, the Glassman had installed the 48"x84" laminated bulletproof glass. During the daytime, you could tell that the OP Center and living room windows were protected, but at night with the 24 lights turned on you could barely see the house. Can you get calluses from milking cows?

"What do you think?"

“I think you tricked me into milking the cow.”

“I meant about the shelter generator room and everything.”

“I haven’t looked. It seems to me that we told everyone we were out of money so they’d leave us alone and then you set out to make it true.”

“Come with me and I’ll give you the grand tour. You may be surprised and I’m sure you’re going to like what you see.”

“That’s the ladder to the generator room.”

“Where?”

“You can’t see it?”

“See what?”

“Good. I’ll show you, you move this piece of wood to expose the handle and just lift. It is counterbalance so even you can lift it.”

“Nice, but I’m not climbing any ladders unless it’s an absolute emergency.”

“Come over here. What do you see?”

“The barn. We’re inside of the barn.”

“This is where the emergency exit tunnel comes out of the shelter. We ran a 40’ piece of 3’ pipe and turned it up to the surface.”

“I don’t see anything Sue, but I believe you.”

“Let’s go to the basement, next. I figured we should have a closed, locking storage cabinet for our medical supplies and we used that for the entrance to the tunnel to the shelter.”

“How does it work?”

“You open the cabinet and pull the latch. I took your idea of using a piano hinge and used it. The cabinet swings open and, voila, the tunnel.”

“You didn’t use oval culvert!”

“I couldn’t get it so we used round concrete culvert. Follow me.”

“This is what we should have had before the war.”

“If you hadn’t dismantled that improvised shelter, we probably still wouldn’t have it, dear. The way the electrician set up the generators is that we’d only run one at a time. When it’s time to service one, you start the other and use the control panel to transfer power to the other generator. Then, you can let the first generator cool down before you service it. We put all of you filters and spare parts on those shelves over there. If the generator fails for any reason, the other one kicks in.”

“Nice. What are all of these doors made of?”

“Road plate. This door over here leads to the shelter.”

“Lead the way.”

“We bunk on this end and the bathroom is on the other. Next to the bathroom is a small kitchen. We did it that way to minimize the amount of plumbing. It is a flush toilet that drains into a black water tank. That’s pumped into the septic system. We have a 200-gallon water tank replenished by the well. I put in a 12ft² freezer and a small refrigerator. I stocked the freezer from our large freezer and will rotate out the stock when we get replacements. There is a table there for your radio gear and we ran parallel lines and terminated them in antenna switches.”

“What about guns?”

“I’d suggest that we keep out what we think we’re going to need and store the remainder down here along with the extra ammunition.”

“Sue, it’s perfect but like I said before, this is what we should have before the war.”

“You mean the Chinese War don’t you? In case you haven’t been paying attention, the only thing slowing people from coming into the area is the weather. We’ve already had to defend our home 3 times in less than a year. I have one more improvement to make. I want to replace the basement door with a road plate and cover it with a bookcase that’s mounted right on the door. We can’t possible store everything we have in the shelter and I’d prefer if the basement wasn’t easily accessible.”

“Fine, just show me how it works when you get it done. Ok, I’ll milk the cow.”

o

In case you’re curious, Sue had it set up so flipping one particular light switch released the latch on the bookcase door. The switch could be disabled from the other side of the door. This was getting way over my head, but I sort of liked having a wife who looked out for our long-term interests. She’d finished the 2 custom quilts and collected the \$3,600. She spent that money several times over on the project but the way she arranged it, most of the people thought they were being paid with the money she got from

selling quilts. So complete was the illusion that people asked us if we had money to pay for things before they'd talk to us.

To look at our place, a person would never believe that we had much to offer. However, if you looked close, you'd see the protected windows and begin to wonder. By this time everyone in the area knew I had purchased that Ma Deuce at the farmer's market and wasn't afraid to use it to protect the two of us. Being from California, I'm the sort of fellow who thinks good fences makes good neighbors. But, all we had around the place was 3 strands of barbed wire, the same as everyone else. There was a feedlot behind the barn for the animals to enter and leave the barn itself. There was also the machine shed that I used for storage and a garage. Other than that, there was just the 100-year-old 2-story farmhouse.

Our picking up the 2 M16A3/M203s hadn't hurt reinforcing the image that we were people that it didn't pay to fool with. Heck, it was only by the strangest of circumstances that we were even alive. Back in '99, our first choice had been Mesa, AZ. We couldn't afford it and checked out Albuquerque next. It was a little better but not much. Then a realtor asked us if we cared where we lived if we could do it cheap. Cheap is good, we told him and he mentioned the place for sale by the Sheriff North of Alamogordo. We drove down and checked it out and before we knew it, made the highest bid at the auction. And that's how we came to live on US 54 just north of Tularosa.

The well was from a deep aquifer and had a fairly new pump. Like I said, I spent from '99 until '05 repairing and painting and the place did look pretty good. Painted the barn, hen house and machine shed red and trimmed them out in white paint. Painted the house white and trimmed it out in green paint. Added a few touches like decorative shutters that didn't shut and so on and the place really looked nice. When we put in that armor plate and bulletproof glass the shutters came down and were put back up after with contractor's cement. We tried to keep the house looking as nice as possible. I know I told you what I did with the sandbags, right? I built a couple of foxholes aka fighting positions.

o

"Long time no see, Sgt. Collins, what brings you here?"

"My enlistment is up and I'm not going to reenlist."

"Thinking of moving to Alamogordo?"

"Not exactly no. I don't suppose you'd have some land to sell would you?"

"Nope, just have the place. The piece next to us to the east isn't occupied by anyone, maybe you could buy it. Going to build a home?"

“No, we were just going to have our mobile home transported to our new location. But you know by the time a man buys land, puts in a septic system, drills a well and so forth he’s in the poorhouse. Army pay isn’t the greatest and it’s hard saving when you’re married and have a couple of kids.”

“I think I owe you a couple of Bud’s come in, sit and we’ll talk.”

“Hi Sergeant.”

“Hello Mrs. Ryan, how are you?”

“We’re getting by. What with the rationing and everything, it hard sometimes to make ends meet. What bring you here?”

“I was looking for a place to set our mobile home. Mr. Ryan said that you folks don’t own any extra land.”

“We don’t, but how big is a mobile home, 15’ wide and 70’ long? How much space would that take?”

“Our home is 16’ x 90’, Mrs. Ryan. 3 bedrooms and 2 baths.”

“You know, Barry, we could let them set their home up here until they can find a permanent place.”

“Yeah, Sergeant Collins, we could do that. We have a good well, oversized septic system and a generator for power.”

“I wouldn’t want to impose, but thanks for offering.”

“Hey, you pulled our behinds out at least once, if I recall. There aren’t a lot of jobs available so what would you live on?”

“I was raised on a farm so maybe I could find a job as a ranch hand.”

“You know about horses, cattle, pigs and chickens?”

“I’m originally from Nebraska and we raised those and a lot of grain.”

“You mind shoveling manure?”

“What goes in comes out and you use it for fertilizer.”

“Sergeant, I was born and raised in Los Angeles. I never considered farming when we bought this farmstead, all I wanted was the house. Then, I worked for 5-6 years repairing, painting and such and got it to look nice. But never did I want any livestock.”

The Asian Question – Chapter 24

“We have 2 mares, 2 fillies, a cow, a steer and Sue plans to buy pigs and chickens. I don’t want to farm and I do not like shoveling manure or milking that darned cow. If Sue agrees, how would you like to work for us? We can’t pay much, but you’d get food from the garden, meat, eggs, milk and a little money. You would get a place for your home rent free with utility connections and have electricity. Then when you found a job, you could work it and continue to work for us doing the farm chores. You’d still get the lot and so forth in compensation.”

“Sergeant Collins, where are your wife and children?”

“Looking around Alamogordo.”

“Well get in your pickup and go get them. It doesn’t make much sense you getting a motel when we have a 2-story house. That way, we can meet your family and we can all discuss this offer Barry made you.”

“Are you sure?”

“Barry go get a big beef roast out of the freezer. Of course I’m sure Sergeant. By the way, what is your first name?”

“Richard. My wife’s name is Mary and our kids are Susan and Ron.”

“Did you hear that Barry, their daughter’s name is the same as mine?”

“Yes, dear.”

Sue had always liked Sgt. Dick Collins. When she found out that he and his wife had a daughter named Susan, she just beamed. Our only child, Barry Jr., had been killed in junior high school, the victim of a drive by shooting where he wasn’t even the target. That had been tough on both of us, but then, that was a long time ago. He probably would have been just about Dick’s age, 30. A man needs a legacy and some want-to-be gangster stole ours. Never caught the kid either. By God if they had, I’d have sure wanted to have 5 minutes alone with that kid. I have saved the state of California about \$15 grand a year. Back in those days, I was pretty depressed; I’d have done him and probably myself. I’ll have to tell you, the more I think about having a young man about Barry’s age around the place and some youngsters that we can sort of substitute for the grandchildren we never had, the more I like the idea. I sure hope this works out.

“Hello, I’m Sue Ryan, you must be Mary.”

“Very pleased to meet you Mrs. Ryan.”

“Call me Sue and Richard, you call me Sue too. Come in and bring your things, I made up 3 of the bedrooms for you.”

“We really appreciate everything, but we don’t want to impose. We can get a motel in Alamogordo.”

“You’ll do no such thing. Motels are expensive and this is a huge house. I needed to change that dusty bedding anyway.”

“This is Susan and that remarkable young man over there is Ron.”

“If you kids want a soda, there’s coke in the refrigerator. Let me show you your rooms.”

Sue took the 4 of them upstairs and put each of the kids in a separate room and Dick and Mary in our guest room, the one with the queen sized bed. That was the mattress I’d dragged down to the improvised shelter. Our room had a king sized bed and the other bedrooms full sized beds. The upstairs had a total of 5 bedrooms and 2 baths. On the main floor was another bedroom that Sue used for her sewing room, a living room with the machine gun, a dining rooms and the kitchen. You know that I used one of the bedrooms for my OP, the one on the front of the house on the other side of the bath. Our master bedroom had a master bath. Of course, there was a ½ bath, powder room, on the main floor. Stool and sink, you know.

“Do you prefer Richard or Dick?”

“Dick.”

“Well, Dick, let me get you a beer out of the refrigerator and show you the downstairs. We’ve made a few changes since you were here last.”

“Wasn’t the door right about there?”

“You have a good memory. It still is, but you now open it by flipping this light switch.”

I flipped the switch and the door released and came open a couple of inches. I turned off the switch and then showed him the shutoff switch that disabled the living room switch. We went down stairs and looked around. About the only things that had changed was the removal of the improvised shelter and installation of the medicine cabinet that led to the shelter.

“Now, if you unlock this cabinet and pull this ring, it releases the latch on the door to our new shelter.”

“When did you put this in?”

“The paint is almost still wet, Dick. Follow me to our new generator room. Watch your head, it’s only a 6’ concrete culvert.”

“What are those doors made of?”

“Road plate. That was Sue’s idea. I’ll tell you the truth; I didn’t have anything to do with this project. This is the generator room and as you can see, we have 2 of the 12.5kw RV gensets now. Plus, we have the 5kw gasoline powered unit I used to use to supply power when I service the main generator. That hole over there goes up to ground level and I’ll show you the access tomorrow. This door over here leads to the actual shelter.”

“This is what you should have had during the war.”

“I think I’ve said that 3 or 4 times myself, Dick. Anyway, this door is the shelter door and it is a 30’ x 8’ tank. I think Sue calculated the volume as something over 11,000 gallons. She added a small freezer, put in a ¾ bath and a small kitchenette. We have hammocks on the other end and there is room for 6, easy. I have a table to put my radios on and she had extra antenna wires run. There is also a small gun cabinet.”

“Wow. You’re ready for World War 4.”

“Actually we were thinking more about bad guys come spring. How are you fixed up for weapons?”

“I have a M1911, a 12-gauge shotgun and a .22 rifle.”

“No military weapons?”

“Other than the .45, no.”

“Sue and I picked up a couple to round out our firepower but I don’t much care for them. If you’re going to live here, would you be willing to use them?”

“What do you have?”

“A pair of M16A3s with the M203s, 10,000 rounds of ammo, 144 40mm grenades and 10 magazines per rifle.”

“Really? Where did you get those?”

“At the farmer’s market from the guy who used to sell the .50 caliber machineguns. You know the strange thing was that when he ran out of machineguns, he didn’t run out of ammo. We manage to pick up an additional 2,000 rounds of .50BMG. 2 cans of 100 rounds each to the crate and we got 10 crates.”

“Ball/tracer?”

“AP/APIT.”

“Would you like some more?”

“Would a drunk like a case of Jack Daniel’s?”

“I take it that was yes. I have a friend in supply who has a bunch of the stuff, but it’s all ball/tracer.”

“It shoots, right?”

“Yes.”

“I take all I can get and buy more if the price is right. I have 4 barrels for the Ma Deuce, the original and the spare plus 2 more spares I picked up. You might want to see about extra ammo and grenades for the 2 rifles I’m giving to you to use.”

“Do you have bayonets?”

“If you’re close enough to use a bayonet, you’re too darned close.”

“Well feast your eyes on those.”

“Those are M16A3s, Barry. The M16A3 Rifle is a full-auto M16A2 Rifle with a flat top upper receiver and detachable carrying handle. The flat top upper receiver has an integral rail that will be utilized (when the carrying handle is removed) to mount optical devices to the weapon. The M16A3 Rifle in combination with the M5 Rail Adapter forms the Modular Weapon System (rifle version), which provides soldiers the flexibility to configure their weapons with those accessories required to fulfill an assigned mission. There are no differences between the internal dimensions of the M16A2 Rifle and the M16A3 Rifle. I can also get 2 of the M4 Carbine (SOPMOD M4) Accessory Kits comprised of the following components: 4X Day Scope, Reflex Sight, Rail Interface System (MIL-STD 1913), Vertical Forward Handgrip, Quick Attach/Detach M203 Grenade Launcher Mount and Sight, Infrared Laser Pointer/Illuminator, Visible Laser, Visible Bright Light, Backup Iron Sight, Combat Sling, Sloping Cheek Weld Stock, Mini Night Sight, Suppressor and 9" M203 Grenade Launcher Barrel.”

“Can you figure out how to put the M203s on our M1A rifles?”

“I could probably figure out something. In 1961, an experimental breech loading X-1 40mm grenade launcher was built for the M14. It attached to the gas cylinder and bayonet lug. Aiming was performed using the standard M15 grenade launcher sight.”

“Dick, if you could do that, you’d have my eternal gratitude.”

Sue said supper would be a while so I took Dick out and showed him the entrance to the shelter, the escape tunnel that went to the barn and we decided where might be a good place to set a massive 16' x 90' trailer house. Is there a rule that says if you improve your generating capacity, you're going to need it? Is there a rule that says if you build a bomb shelter the Russians or someone will attack the US with nukes? There is! It says somewhere that God never gives you more than you can handle. We might be out a little food and some extra fuel, but I wouldn't have to shovel manure anymore.

"Dick, are your appliance gas or electric?"

"Gas."

"Crap. We'll have to get a propane tank and convert your stove and other major appliances to bottle gas."

"Oh, I have the jets. The home came with natural gas jets installed but a plastic bags containing the propane/LP jets."

"Sue, we need a propane tank. Know anyone who sells propane?"

"How big of a tank?"

"What do I know? Get either a 500 or 1,000 gallon tank, assuming you can."

"What do you folks use for fuel?"

"Coal or wood in the furnace and wood in the kitchen stove and fireplace."

"I guess that explains all of the firewood."

"We put in a load of coal, just before the war. Seems to last longer than the wood and produces a lot of heat."

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The next morning, after breakfast, Dick left for El Paso to get the home moved. Sue headed to Alamogordo to find a propane tank and propane. Mary and Susan busied themselves with something and Ron stuck to me like a tick on a hound.

The Asian Question – Chapter 25

That kid must have had 10,000 questions. I wasn't used to playing the \$64,000 Question, and I suppose that after a while, my patience began to wear a little thin. They hadn't said how old Ron and Susan were but I was guessing Susan was maybe 11 or 12 and Ron was about 9 going on 30. That kid had a remarkable a memory. He'd point to a gun in my gun rack and recite to official nomenclature, as in rifle, 7.62mm, M14 or M14A1, is a light-weight air-cooled, gas operated, magazine fed, shoulder fired...

"That's not a M14, it's a M1A, Ron."

"What's that on the end of the barrel?"

"A suppressor. Call it the ultimate flashhider."

"What's the difference between a M14 and a M1A?"

"The M1A is the civilian version of the rifle built by Springfield Armory most recently. They make several models: the Standard model, the Loaded model, the National Match, the Super Match, the M21, the M25 and they later introduced the Scout Squad rifle, the SOCOM 16 and the SOCOM II."

"What model is yours?"

"That's the Loaded model. My wife is frugal and said that we weren't shooting competition so we didn't need anything fancy like those other models."

"What does frugal mean?"

"She's a cheapskate, Ron. I don't suppose that's fair, boy. Thrifty might be a better word. She makes sure she gets value for her money. She bought the Mil Standard M1911 semiautomatic pistols because she said they were good enough."

"What kind of horses are those?"

"Brown horses. Females. About 15-16 hands high. How do I know, they all look alike to me?"

"What kind of radio is that?"

"Here you go Ron, read the manual and you can explain it to me."

o

"Did you find a propane tank?"

“1,000-gallons and they recommend burying it. Installation is extra, but I told them to just bring it, install it and fill it. Did you decide where to spot their mobile home?”

“Dick did. He said he’d prefer to set it behind the machine shed. It is level there and it wouldn’t be noticeable from the road. I doubt he’ll be back until tomorrow or the day after. He’s doing some shopping for us and himself.”

“Oh, what for?”

“He’s picking up SOPMOD kits for the 2 M16A3s we have and more of the ball/tracer mix for the Ma Deuce. Those kits come with M203s and he said that he thinks he can adapt something to install them on our M1As. Apparently the Army experimented with mounting one on a M14 rifle in the early ‘60s.”

“You just gave him those rifles? What were you thinking of? I thought they were M16A2s.”

“I was thinking that 4 rifles firing at the same time beat the heck out of 2 rifles firing at the same time. The A3 and the A4 are nearly identical. Be careful of Ron. That kid absorbs information like a sponge and asks a lot of questions.”

“Does Mary know how to use a M16?”

“I have no idea Sue, but she’s a mother with 2 children to protect married to a man who spent 8 years in the Army. Stop, I spent all morning being grilled by a 9-year-old sponge.”

“Want to know about the birds and the bees?”

“No, he wanted me to explain the difference between a M14 and a M1A. I’ll bet you he can repeat every word I said to him. I used the frugal in a sentence and then had to define it for him.”

“Oh, talking about me?”

“I guess so, I told him frugal meant thrifty.”

“Hah! I’ll bet you called me a cheapskate.”

“If I did I’d never admit it. Do you think it will work out having Dick and Mary here?”

“Now is a strange time to ask. You could have discussed it with me before you suggested they could set their trailer here. Like you said, Barry, 4 guns are better than 2. It’s starting to warm up a little, I think spring is almost here. Have you given any thought to what we should plant this year?”

“I’m not planting pinto beans; I’ll probably plant green beans, potatoes, onions, corn, beets, carrots and cucumbers. We could grow tomatoes and green peppers and freeze the green peppers. Want to make spaghetti sauce?”

“You’ll need to plant garlic if you want that, Barry.”

“Why don’t you make a list and so will I? I’ll try to plant everything either of us thinks of.”

“I’ll ask Mary if there is anything she or Richard would like.”

“He prefers to be called Dick.”

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My buying all of that Bud probably had the bartender thinking I was a drunk. If I drank 3 cans in a week, it was a lot. In all earnestness, some times were a Bud moment, but one shouldn’t infer that that meant a drunk. Coke Classic, on the other hand, didn’t last long. We’d really stocked up on Coke and a mixture of soft drinks but I had four times as much Coke as I had anything else, including Bud. We had left over jars every year but Sue liked to hit the garage sales. Some people washed out their spaghetti sauce jars and saved them because she’d always buy them. She had enough jars to can 400 quarts and 200 pints of vegetables, preserves or whatever. There was a multi-year supply of lids and rings and we had enough hermetically sealed cans of seeds for several seasons and all were heirloom varieties. It even include thing we didn’t care for like Swiss chard.

Dick showed up on the third day leading the semi pulling their trailer and I had stakes laid out showing where it should go. I never set a trailer before, but Dick showed me how to level it and marry it to the ground with those little stands. When he was satisfied, we began connecting the electricity, water and sewer. The last thing we hooked up was the propane and I refused to do that until he converted their appliances to propane. The propane man said the average family probably used about 500 gallons a year. It would depend on how warm they kept the home, the weather and a number of things. I’d lost track of time but it was Friday or Saturday before their home was ready to occupy.

There were so many things left to accomplish, store the .50BMG ammo, install the SOPMOD kits on the M16A3s, figure out how to adapt the M203 to the M1As, and always, the chores. Dick asked when was the last time we’d had the mares shod and added that to a list to things to do. We figured we could start planting garden in 4 weeks, may sooner. They couldn’t have timed it better either, the following week the rancher showed up with the pigs Sue wanted. Because we had 6 mouths instead of 2, he returned with 4 more pigs.

Sue made a run into town and came back with the chickens, a doubled order. I like to work from lists, do you suppose I’m a shade on the Obsessive Compulsive side? I turned that little handicap into an asset, scheduling the planting of the garden. Where

Dick got the blueprints of the experimental X-1 grenade launcher-mounting device is anyone's guess. The gunsmith in town was more than happy to build two for us. Well, 1) they weren't experimental; and, 2) they launched rifle grenades. It carried the military designation M76 and required an M15 grenade launcher sight.

Folks, don't come to the farmstead unless you radio first or you may object to the greeting you get. You'll know we're on alert if you hear the surplus military klaxon going. If you hear it, stop at the property entrance and announce yourself. Sue and I will be in the OP center and Dick and Mary will be crewing that Ma Deuce. You'll be up against amazing firepower. Dick brought back an interesting assortment of things including 4 containers of M72 LAW rockets. A military detachment might smirk at what we had, but it would take a sizeable force to overrun us.

The M72 were packed as 5 rockets to the cardboard box, 3 boxes to the wooden crate (FM 3-23-.25, Chapter 2). We had 4 crates or 60 weapons, enough for one heck of a firefight. He also brought another case of M118LR for Sue's M-40 and 10 boxes, 2,000 rounds, of .50BMG 4 to 1 ball/tracer mix. He picked up 2 of the M9s somewhere but he avoided the GI ball ammo with a passion, electing instead to get 1,000 rounds of Speer Gold Dot law enforcement ammo.

We made sure the Sheriff knew all about our recent preps and he assured me that he'd pass the word to the militia. While additional radios would have been nice, we could get by with what we had (I think now that was more of a prayer than any real knowledge on my part). What I hadn't anticipated was Mary's reluctant to use a firearm. I'd always assumed that she be a willing student. Sue told me to back off and allow her to get accustomed to the idea. She'd handle this but Dick and I weren't to bring it up. At 13, Susan could probably handle a M16 but at 9, Ron could only handle a .22. Not wanting him to feel left out; I supplied him with a 10/22 and some of the 25 round magazines. We had those 3 Browning Hi-Powers and with the Speer ammo, they were respectable weapons. They were the standard 13-round Browning magazines and I made a note to try and find 6 more so we'd have 5 per pistol.

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Sue started the tomatoes and peppers and set them in front of all of the windows to get the available daylight. That hadn't even occurred to me. She preferred Roma's for canning and a large fruited hybrid for eating. Once we had the lists of what everyone wanted, I sorted through the seeds to see if we could accommodate the lists. I could, but it would mean using some hybrids. There is nothing wrong with using hybrid seeds unless you're trying to produce seed for future plantings. I wasn't worried about that I had heirloom seeds for most of the key vegetables and enough hybrids for 8-10 seasons.

The government might be slower than the 7-year itch, but they'd get everything cleaned up and rebuilt, eventually. As far as security went, we had the Neighborhood Watch and the County militia. We should be able to hold any ill-intentioned people at bay until the Sheriff could roll in a rescue force. What more could a pair of families ask for? We had

water, sewage, electricity and fuel including wood, coal, propane and diesel. As far as food went, we had really stocked up on staples before the war and we'd barely put a dent in our supplies. The rationing was nice; it allowed us to fill in a little here and a little there. For a family that didn't have a large supply of food to begin with, living on what you were allowed by rationing might have been hard. You'd probably be eating lots of beans, rice and pasta. The last time the US had rationing, victory gardens were all the rage.

You may recall that the subject of replenishing the coal had come up and we'd put that off until spring. Spring was just around the corner and I wasn't loading the furnace with near as much coal, just enough to keep it going and produce a small amount of heat. Sue informed me that she'd taken care of the coal the last time she'd been in town.

"Still flashing money that we don't have?"

"Not at all, I did it on the sly. I did have a couple people wanting to know about our building project and I told them that was money we had set-aside specifically for the purpose. They asked what we built and I told them we'd just made some minor improvements. Oh, our favorite gun dealer at the farmer's market wasn't there. ATF arrested him for dealing in stolen weapons."

"I wondered. Well, I suppose everything we bought was hot."

"I consider it a tax refund, dear. Don't worry about it, he sold a lot of weapons and nobody said anything about the government looking to pick up the weapons he sold. By the way, the election is in a couple of weeks, did you decide who you were going to vote for?"

"Some choice, John McCain or Barack Obama. I'm not so sure I want to vote for either."

"Me either. There is no law that says we have to vote, but I was thinking we ought to vote against one of them."

"When in doubt I always vote Republican. McCain was a war hero of sorts, so I guess I'd bite the bullet and vote for him. What has Barack Obama ever done?"

"You do know that McCain will probably win, right?"

"What makes you think so?"

"20 metropolitan areas were destroyed, that would have sharply reduced the Democrats base."

"Maybe, but Bush started the war with China and Bush is a Republican."

The Asian Question – Chapter 26

“Did Bush start the war with China or did the Chinese simply attack our country?”

“I don’t know, but I don’t think there can be any doubt that the Chinese had weapons of mass destruction.”

“Huh?”

“Never mind.”

“Oh, you meant Iraq. We all know they had them Barry because they used them on the Kurds. Saddam probably moved his stuff to Syria when it appeared to him that the US was going to invade.”

“So you’re suggesting that Bush got a bad rap on the war in Iraq?”

“Don’t you find it strange that all of the Representatives and Senators who voted for the war suddenly claimed that they were lied to when the war began to drag out? We may never know if Bush was entirely at fault, but like Harry Truman said, *the buck stops here*. If you had been the President and Taiwan asked you for assistance, would you have provided it?”

“I imagine that I would have, yes Sue.”

“I think that I would have done the same thing the President did, so I can’t see where that makes Bush responsible for the Chinese attacking the United States. If that’s the case, then it can’t be the fault of any political party. I’m going to vote against Obama, just on principles.”

“Like I said, when in doubt, vote Republican.”

“At least McCain has never been caught cheating on his wife.”

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Did you ever notice how when you get older you begin to engage in meaningful discussions with your spouse? Two people out of the remaining ~1.5 million in the state of New Mexico probably wouldn’t have much effect on the May 13th election. But it was possible that many couples were having the same discussion a couple of weeks before the election. Anyway, it was time to get the first planting started in the garden. In previous years, I might have started a little earlier, but winter this past year had been colder and longer than usual.

If there was any message in the war between China and the United States, the message probably was, “Don’t mess with the US, we’re wipe your country off the map.”

Even with the country having launched a massive attack against China, I'd be willing to bet that the population of China far exceeded the population of the US; they had 1 billion more people than we had to start off with. Moreover, I can't believe that we hit random locations in China; therefore a majority of their population must have survived. Whether or not we took out the leadership hadn't been revealed. As I've pointed out, there wasn't a lot of news these days.

Just to grind the point into the ground. If you were the leadership of China and had decided to launch an attack on a vastly more powerful enemy, would you leave you Backfire C bombers sitting in their hangers? Or, would you have them airborne loaded with weapons that you wanted to save, much in the fashion that the US moved the F-117s and B-2s to Area 51? There were no reports on the news announcing what we'd done to the Chinese Navy, if anything. All that had been reported was that we'd halted the invasion with a bombing campaign and the Chinese had launched nukes on the 7th Fleet, most of which had survived.

Did the United States have any of the PAC-3 or THAAD systems left in case we were attacked again? Or, had we launched everything in an effort to intercept the warheads. If you've really read my journal, you already know the answer. We had one heck of a lot more missiles than launchers. The Patriot missile system had undergone continual upgrading. The current iteration was a kinetic kill weapon with an enhancement, 78kg of explosives. Originally fielded in batteries with 4 missiles per canister, they now had 8.

One of those Communist front newspapers, Pravda North (the Boston Globe) had been highly critical of the Patriot system after the Gulf War. But, I'd imagine that in the 15 years since the criticism, the Army got it right. Which brings up another interesting point. If we only successfully intercepted ~90 of the warheads and ~60 got through, why were only 20 MAs and 4 military bases hit? Multiple targeting? I stopped trying to make sense of it a while back.

I had to get the rototiller running so I could cultivate between the rows of things we'd already planted and prepare the seed beds for the remainder. I suppose I should add more PRI-G to the drums of gasoline, because the manufacturer recommends treating it every year. The question now becomes, how do you shake a 55-gallon drum of gas to blend the contents? Dick suggested that we add the PRI-G and roll the barrels around. Having Mary and him was going to work out good!

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On May 13th, we voted early and then I worked in the garden. Dick contacted someone to shoe the horses because they were way overdue. We had to find someone to buy feed from so we could feed those stinking hogs, too. While we were at it, Dick added grain for the remainder of the livestock. Sue picked up the chicks, and I'm guessing she must have gotten 200, give or take. She said that a portion of them would be for fryers and the remainder would be laying hens. I can still smell the feathers from when she bought 12 baking hens, so it's going to be up to Dick to butcher these chickens.

Except for keeping watch in the OP and living with rationing, the country here in this area wasn't much different from before the war. The word was that electricity would be restored soon and we could finally give our generators a rest. I think I should write Cummins/Onan a letter and offer to become an official tester for their products. From mid-August 2008 until mid-May 2009 (9 months), that RV genset never missed a beat. Well, make it 7 months because in March we added the second genset. Or, was that April? Didn't matter they both worked just fine. The Sheriff called us all into Alamogordo for a meeting because it seemed that there was trouble brewing.

"Everyone find a seat and listen up, I'll try to be short, but this is very important," the Sheriff said.

"We're getting reports of several armed groups moving around and attacking rural locations. We need to be especially vigilant from now on."

"Why doesn't the Army bring in forces?" Mort asked.

"That would be a law enforcement function and the President reinstated Posse Comitatus several months back. At the moment, it is a state and local law enforcement problem. The Army will only come in if there is a case of insurrection."

"What would you call roving bands of killers and thieves?"

"Insurrection is the act or an instance of open revolt against civil authority or a constituted government," The Sheriff replied. "I'd call them just what they are, murderers and thieves. This isn't California and our militia is well armed. Our main problem seems to be fuel and the shrinkage that the Chevron distributor reported. Fortunately, it was diesel, not gasoline."

Hmm, the Chevron distributor covered the fuel he sold Sue and me by reporting it as stolen? It figures, but I can't say that I like the implications of that. If anyone found out that we'd bought the fuel and another generator, there could be trouble. Sue had been very careful about who she selected to do the work at the farmstead, but still... Doesn't matter, the darned fool gave us a receipt for 7,500 gallons of #2 diesel fuel and 2 tanks, a 11,000-gallon and a 5,000-gallon. Well, loose lips sink ships so I'm not about to bring it up.

"Sheriff, any word on when we can expect electrical service to be restored?"

"Sometime in June and when the electrical service is back, we should have the phones up and running. They're working on the problem as fast as they can."

"What do you want us to do if we see a roving band of murderers and thieves?"

“Call it in on your SINCGARS and do the best that you can to protect your families. We anticipate a response time anywhere in the County in less than 30 minutes.”

“Sheriff, 30 minutes is a very long time,” I pointed out.

“Barry, in your case it would be more like 15-20 minutes. Anyway, you have that machinegun of yours. And, if I recall correctly, Sue and you bought 2 of the M16s with the grenade launchers, didn’t you?”

“Yes, we did. And we have Dick Collins and his wife to help us defend the place. By the way, Dick is looking for a job as a ranch hand if anyone has work.”

“Put a notice on the bulletin board. While we’re talking Barry, I understand the Sue and you made some home improvements.”

“A couple of minor improvements are all. We set the money aside for the work and spent the last of our money on the things from the gun dealer at the farmer’s market.”

“How are you getting by?”

“Sue is making quilts. We’re getting just enough to buy food.”

The murmur that went through that crowd at the meeting seemed to suggest that not everyone believed my explanation. Tough! The less I said the better. Presumably when they got the phones back up, we’d receive my back disability and pension payments so I have another means to explain why we still had a little money. I have 10 months’ worth of money coming.

“Any chance we could get more of the SINCGARS radios, Sheriff?”

“Not likely. What’s the problem, Barry, you have an all band ham radio that you can raise VHF and UHF Guard frequencies on? You can always call Holloman AFB if your SINCGARS goes out.”

“Never mind, Sheriff.”

“We have some handouts and I’d appreciate it if everyone could take one on your way out. That’s all I have. Everyone keep their heads up, butts down and let us know if there is trouble. If anyone has any questions, speak to one of my Deputies.”

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Dick and I grabbed the handouts and got out of there fast. It looked to me like the Sheriff was headed my direction and I didn’t want to answer a lot of questions. On the way back home, I asked Dick about the radios.

“Are you dead certain you can’t get us another SINCGARS?”

“Where did you get the idea that I couldn’t? You never asked, Barry. Yes, I can get a SINCGARS if you want. I might even be able to get you a good used TS2000X, for a price.”

“Sue still has plenty of gold, that’s just a story we’re spreading around to eliminate the idea that we have money. You tell her how much you need to get 2 SINCGARS and the used TS2000X. I’d really like to set up duplicate radios in the shelter and you should have a SINCGARS in your mobile home.”

“Do you want anything else while I’m off on a buying trip?”

“Could you get us any hand grenades?”

“What kind would you like? I can get some M67s and some of the Mk3A2 concussion grenades. If you want, I can get smoke and incendiary grenades.”

“All of the above, in whatever proportions you can get them. Will it take you long?”

“With gold? You’re kidding, right? Since the advent of computers, supply personnel have to do things differently, but that doesn’t mean that shipments they receive don’t sometimes come up short.”

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Dick was only gone about 4 hours. It took us 30 minutes to unload his pickup. There were 2 SINCGARS radios and a TS2000X in the box, but obviously used. He told me that it came from that Spec 4 and it had been modified to an all frequency radio. Dick had quite the assortment of hand grenades and even one item I hadn’t thought of, M18A1 Claymore mines. He only had 12, but that was probably enough for one round of protecting the roadside of the property. Dick said they should be placed 3 meters apart, but with only 12, all we could do was evenly space them, assuming we used them.

I guess we’re ready for WW IV and WW V, now. Maybe not for a global climate change or a rock coming in at the planet from behind the Sun, but how can you get ready for something like that? I never really believed that bad things come in 3s. If H.G. Wells was right, what we should be preparing for is a Martian invasion. That sort of gives a whole new meaning to the term World War. The majority of the action takes place in the countryside of early 20th century southeast England. The first Martian landing is on Horsell common, on the outskirts of the narrator’s home town, Woking. Other major action occurs near Southend, where the narrator’s brother and his companions gain passage on a steamboat while fleeing to mainland Europe.

There were ten mentioned Martian landings commencing just after midnight in June during “the first years of the Twentieth Century”:

First Martian Landing (Day 1): Horsell Common.
Second Martian Landing (Day 2): Addlestone Golf Links.
Third Martian Landing (Day 3): Pryford.
Fourth Martian Landing (Day 4): Bushey Heath.
Fifth Martian Landing (Day 5): Sheen.
Sixth Martian Landing (Day 6): Wimbledon.
Seventh Martian Landing (Day 7): Primrose Hill, London.
8th, 9th, 10th Landings (Days 8, 9, 10): not mentioned in the book - presumably within London.

The duration of the war was three weeks:

Days One and Two were the Martians securing their initial bridgehead around Woking.
Day Three was the first major offensives of the invasion (Battle of Weybridge/Shepperton and the opening of the attack on London).
Day Four was the day of the great panic and escape from London.
Day Five was when the narrator was imprisoned by the fifth Martian landing.
Day Six was when the city of London was totally occupied by the Martians.
Day Seven was the Battle of Southend.
Days Eight through twenty-one was when the narrator was watching the Martians while still trapped.
Days 19 and 20 was when the narrator made his way to London.
Day 21 (early morning) was when the Martians were found dead.

I had *War of the Worlds* in my book collection and while I sat on watch eating peanuts and drinking Coke, I read to keep myself entertained. It beat the heck out of being bored or playing \$64,000 Question with Ron. Surely by now the Martians had received the 1938 broadcast by Mercury Theatre of the air and knew that if they invaded our world, we'd get them with biological weapons. Those dry roasted peanuts are a good snack if you're not allergic to peanuts.

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They finally delivered the coal so we were ready for next winter. Funny, thinking about next winter when we're barely into spring. We'd just finished planting the last of the vegetables, but I'm concerned, it isn't quite as warm as it has been in the past. Maybe there is something to this theory Carl Sagan had about nuclear winter. It didn't matter because I had all sorts of varieties of plants. Sure was nice having Dick to shovel the manure. About all I had to do now was use the rototiller to get the weeds out and a little bit of hoe work between the plants.

We're just trying to get by in face of great adversity. What's it going to be like when they get the electricity restored? Are they going to be able to get the Internet up or was that just wishful thinking on the part of the Sheriff? Whoa, the Sheriff said they'd have the phones up, he didn't say anything about the Internet. We'll, it wasn't up yet even though

TV service had long since been restored. People with cable TV had a choice of getting Internet service from their cable provider or their telephone company. Since you know where we live, you know that we didn't have high-speed Internet available from either a cable or telephone provider. That's not to say that we didn't have high-speed available, but who wanted to spend \$500 a month for T-1 service? We had (past tense) dialup, almost an archaic form of service.

"I understand that you have some Browning Hi-Powers."

"You should know, you returned them to us after the shootout last year with those 3 bad guys."

"I also understand that you were thinking of providing Ron with a 10/22."

"That's right Dick. Both of your children should have firearms and know how to safely handle them. I can give both Ron and Susan a Browning and a 10/22. Susan is old enough and big enough to handle the Browning and it's totally up to you whether you give the whiz kid a handgun."

"Do you have any ball ammo we could use up for target practice? I really hate to use up the Gold Dot."

"I still have that case of M882 you gave me when you gave me the guns. Say, Ron is at that age where he's not old enough for a main battle rifle and we only have 2 M16s. I still have the MP-5, you know."

"Give a submachine gun to a 9 year old boy? Are you nuts?"

"He's big for his age."

"He's 9 years old in his head. I'll teach him to shoot a 10/22 and a Browning, but I think that's stretching the limits."

"Maybe you're right, Dick. But, what could it hurt to teach him to shoot the MP-5? As long as you control the weapons, I believe that you should teach him to shoot both the MP-5 and one of the M16s in addition to the Browning and the Ruger. I just wish I had a Mini-14; it would be the perfect weapon for him. It would also serve as a good training Platform for the M1A."

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"Honey, I need one gold Eagle."

"What for?"

"I was talking to Dick about arming his kids and I happened to mention that a Mini-14 would be a perfect weapon for Ron. The more I think about it, the more I think it would be a perfect weapon for both of those kids. It shoots the same ammo as the M16 and it operates like a M1A. The recoil isn't punishing in any way and I could get 2 Mini-14s and enough of the 30-round magazines to equip both kids for an ounce of gold."

"Good idea, mind if I ride along?"

"Good to have you. I just finished reading *War of the Worlds*. It wasn't anything like the movie, because it was set in England before WW I."

"Was Orson Wells related to H.G. Wells?"

"Orson Welles, with an 'E', not Wells, Sue, different spelling. I don't believe they were related. Why did you ask?"

"One made the other more famous."

"Scared the crap out of the country, or so I understand. In the aftermath of the reported "panic," a public outcry arose, but CBS informed officials that listeners were reminded throughout the broadcast that it was only a performance. Welles and the Mercury Theatre escaped punishment, but not censure, and CBS had to promise never again to use the "we interrupt this program" device for dramatic purposes.

A study by the Radio Project discovered that most of the people who panicked assumed Germans - not Martians - had invaded. Other studies have suggested that the extent of the panic was exaggerated by contemporary media

When a meeting between H.G. Wells and Orson Welles was broadcast on Radio KTSA San Antonio on October 28, 1940 the former expressed a lack of understanding of the apparent panic and suggested that it was, perhaps, only pretense put on, like the American version of Halloween, for fun. The two men and their radio interviewer joked politely about the matter, though clearly with some embarrassment. KTSA, as a CBS affiliate, had carried the original broadcast."

"How do you know that?"

"Oh, it was mentioned in the book cover. The book was a reprint from the '80s. When you consider that Wells wrote the book and it was published in 1898, it was ahead of its time."

The gun dealer wasn't paying a whole lot of attention to the Brady Law these days. You showed him you CCW and filled out the 4473. If you had cash, gold or silver you could be in and out in a few minutes. Providing, of course, he had what you wanted. He'd had a run on guns early on, but this is New Mexico, not California, and most of the people in Alamogordo already had a few firearms. He had a couple of the ranch rifles and a large

number of the 30-round PMI aftermarket magazines. The only thing he was short on was .223 ammo. We bought his last case of surplus .223. We were in and out in under ½ hour.

“Dick, Sue and I went shopping. These rifles are for the kids, but it’s up to you and Mary to decide when they can have them. We got them each a rifle, 10 30-round magazines and a ½ case of .223.”

“It’s still a lot of rifle for Ron, Barry. Being around weapons as he has since we moved here, he’s been advocating for a rifle of his own. But I thought you were thinking about the 10/22s.”

“I was, but the Mini-14 seemed like a better solution. Anyway, I brought you the 2 rifles and 2 of the Browning’s with 5 mags each. The dealer was low on .223, so they’ll have to split the case of surplus.”

“I really don’t know what to say.”

“If you agree with what Sue and I decided, thank you would be more than sufficient.”

I’d noticed when I gone into their house that Mary was wearing a Beretta in a dropdown thigh holster. I could only imagine that the issue of whether or not she was willing to protect her family had been resolved. It would be up to the parents to decide when the kids got their weapons and when they were taught to shoot. We had bigger fish to fry, we needed to lower the mast and add another SINCGARS antenna for Dick and Mary’s radio. I had to finish weeding between the plants in the garden and Dick had to finish his chores in the barn. Two things were of paramount importance, our security and growing food for the coming year.

Mary and Sue talked quite a bit, about what I have no idea. Unless it was something important, Sue rarely shared. On the 12th of June, electricity was restored so I picked up the phone to see if the telephone company was back too. Nada. I let the generator cool off and serviced it so when the power went back down, we’d still have electricity. I set the system to make the new generator the primary unit and gave our longtime companion a rest. That generator had been a good investment, it had run 7,000-hours and we hadn’t had a bit of trouble. I’d serviced it regularly and in return it had kept us in lights for 10 months.

“We should call the Chevron distributor and see if he can top our tanks off,” Sue suggested.

“Did I tell you how he covered the fuel he sold us? Reported it as shrinkage, e.g. stolen. I wonder if we could talk him into topping everything off if we gave him all the coupons we have?”

“I rather doubt that, dear. Not when he can get \$1.50 per gallon over the fixed price and get away with reporting it as stolen.”

The Asian Question – Chapter 27

We needed just over 2,000-gallons to refill the tanks and yes, at \$1.50 a gallon over the fixed price, we could buy more #2 diesel. We worked it out that he should bring exactly 2,000-gallons and it was to be treated with all of the PRI products. We weren't so short on fuel that we couldn't divert some of the rationed fuel to finish off the tanks. We didn't make many trips to Alamogordo and since each family was getting 10 gallons per week, we were getting the diesel in 5-gallon cans and adding it to the storage tanks.

I had serviced the generator 36 times and at 6 quarts per, had a full drum of used oil. There was a place in Alamogordo where we could empty the drum and they'd even take the used oil filters. The drop off was free, but I'm willing to bet that one of these days you'll buy a can of recycled oil that spent 200 hours in my generator. Motor oil doesn't wear out - it just gets dirty. The oil you take to a collection center to be recycled saves energy. It can be reprocessed and used in furnaces for heat, or in power plants to generate electricity for homes, schools and businesses. It can also be made into lubricating oils that meet the same specifications as virgin motor oil.

I probably didn't mention that one of the things I planted was peas. I put in 2 extra hills of potatoes just so we could have new potatoes and peas. I think the time of the year I love best is in the spring and early summer when the first crops start coming in with fresh green beans, new potatoes and peas, fresh lettuce and radishes and all those things that taste so fresh and good.

Dick and Mary had a small upright freezer, about 14ft³. During their Army days, she'd stock up on things, occasionally, when the commissary had a special because of an overstock. Sue and she went through our big chest freezer and pulled the oldest things out and gave them to them so they could get used up before they freezer burned. I didn't get involved in their playing musical freezers but I believe that Dick was pressed into service hauling a few boxes of food.

A person has to understand how rationing works. They don't ration everything, just the things that are hard to get. We had a cow and she produced milk. We could skim the cream and produce our own butter and even a little cheese. Fresh skim milk still tastes better than instant. Dick took the 2 mares over to another ranch for breeding. He suggested we wait a year on the fillies. That was fine with me, but it occurred to me that we had 4 adults and 2 children and only 2 mares and 2 fillies. Breeding the mares would preclude us riding them and the fillies had to finish growing and be broken to saddle.

To keep the cow fresh, she'd have to be bred too. The only way to guarantee a supply of fresh milk year around was to have 2 cows on different breeding cycles. With 4 pigs we could keep one female, have her bred and begin producing our own pork. I don't know what you think, but it sounds to me like this place is turning into a farm or ranch. And, with an increasing herd of livestock, sooner or later it meant I'd be shoveling manure again. We couldn't keep buying hay; we still weren't getting my Disability or pen-

sion. I'd never realized before how dependent the country had become on the telephone and data links.

"Can we plant alfalfa?"

"Where? You don't own any land to plant alfalfa on, or did I misunderstand?"

"The remainder of the ranch has lain fallow ever since we moved here. I think the people who bought it must have been looking at a long-term investment and eventually a housing tract or something. I don't see why we can't use the land to grow feed for our livestock."

"Barry, you don't have any farm equipment. To grow and harvest hay, you'd need a tractor, mower, rake, baler, wagon at a minimum."

"I have a machine shed so all it's going to take is money to get those things, right?"

"Do you have the money? I know you said that you and your wife still had a little gold, but that's a lot of equipment."

"Money isn't the problem. Find the minimum equipment you need might be. We have lots of fuel so it would have to be a diesel tractor, assuming we bought a tractor. We could get a couple of wagons and use the pickups to pull those. As far as the other stuff, I think we can hire it done."

"If you're going to grow hay, we'd better get started, Barry. We've already lost one cutting."

"You take care of it, Dick. What I know about farming and raising crops wouldn't fill the inside cover of a gardening book."

"What about grain?"

"If you can find it, we can buy it. Tell Sue what you need and where to get it. I..."

Ring... ring... ring.

"What was that?"

"The phone! We have phone service back."

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Dick and Mary didn't have a phone line. When we'd set the trailer, that hadn't been a consideration. The trailer was wired, but we only had 2 phone lines, one for voice and the other solely for Internet. Sue and I discussed it and she told me that the phone

company said it would take a couple of weeks to add a third line. She said they'd have to make a service call and connect the third pair of wires. I usually surfed the web at night so I told Dick to use our Internet line to provide them with phone service to their trailer. When the phone company put in the 3rd line, we'd restore the line back to our computer and they could put the third line in their name.

If you're looking for adventure, you can come to the OP and watch for the bad guys yourself. We had been attacked more than enough. What was it, 3 times? The first time was those 3 guys we shot, the 2nd was the guys the Army took out and the 3rd time was when we were doing our Neighborhood Watch thing. But, I had a sinking feeling, especially after that session with the Sheriff. North of Tularosa the only real community was Salinas and beyond that Three Rivers. To the east, on US 70 was Bent and it was about 10 miles, give or take. Both communities were in Otero County and the Sheriff had equipped them with SINCGARS radios. Because of their locations, the Sheriff had designated Three Rivers as Unit 1 and Bent as Unit 2. Our little homestead was Unit 12 unless we got excited. In that case, we seemed to revert to Ryan Ranch.

I had finished weeding and had eaten lunch. It was Coke time and I went upstairs to the OP to drink my Coke and listen to the radio.

"Unit 12, Unit 2."

"This is Unit 12, what's up?"

"You didn't hear the previous radio calls?"

"Negative, what's up?"

"We advised the Sheriff that Salinas was under attack. Has he come by your place yet?"

"I didn't hear any sirens. When did you call?"

"Ten minutes ago."

"Sorry, but his usual response time to our 20 is 15-20 minutes. Sitrep?" (A SITREP, Situation Report, is defined as "an update to an existing report, issued as conditions change or events begin to unfold." Put simply, it's a method of keeping everyone informed.)

"We got the crap kicked out of us but they didn't stay. You have several vehicles coming towards you."

"Roger. How many?"

"I didn't get a chance to count. Several, at least 6."

“Roger.”

“This is Sheriff’s Dispatch, The Sheriff reports that they’re just south of Tularosa. ETA at Unit 12 is 5 minutes and at Unit 2 is 15 minutes.”

“Unit 12, Roger.”

I took off like my pants were on fire yelling for Dick, Mary and Sue to get ready for incoming. I didn’t mention the kids, because I didn’t know what Mary and he had decided back when I gave them the firearms (last week). The four of them came out carrying weapons, question answered. Sue was up in the OP (Observation Post) with her M-40 pointed out the left firing slit. Dick and Mary began putting a belt in the Ma Deuce and the kids came upstairs. I grabbed something for them to stand on and apparently doing as they were taught, they inserted magazines and cycled the actions on their Mini-14s. The Claymores were still in their packaging, a fat lot of good they were going to do.

“This is the Sheriff. We’re turning on to US 54. Unit 12, are you still in the clear?”

“Affirmative.”

I could hear the sirens now; the Sheriff couldn’t be more than a mile away, maybe less. Just then, the vehicles coming in from Salinas passed by.

“Sheriff, Unit 12. They just passed.”

The Sheriff didn’t respond. Ten seconds later we heard gunfire. I spoke into my FRS radio, advising, “Standby, they might be back.”

Just about then, a Jeep Wagoneer, maybe a '90, backed into view. Dick and Mary opened up with the .50 cal and the vehicle exploded, blocking the road. Moments later, a 2nd vehicle stopped and disgorged its occupants. Sue opened fire, as did the children. I didn’t have a target and couldn’t see the point of shooting just for the sake of it. I doubt the kids had targets either, but they were managing to keep the people in that vehicle heads down. Dick and Mary abandoned the Ma Deuce and lobbed 40mm grenades in the general area where the people had moved.

Then a man stood with a RPG-7 on his shoulder and before anyone could totally react, fired the missile. He had a good idea and had his aim been true and we had not added armor plate and bullet resistance glass, we would have surely died. One of the kids fired just moments before the rocket was released and the guy took a round in the shoulder. This forced him to lean back slightly and caused the rocket to fly high, over the house. Sue ended his discomfort with a well place shot, center mass. I said, “Screw it,” and opened up with the M1A doing my best imitation of spray and pray with a semi auto rifle. I only wanted to keep these peoples’ heads down.

“Dick, hose that area down with the 50 cal, we need to keep them from getting any closer to the house.”

I was still holding the mike button when Ma Deuce started to talk with short, carefully spaced bursts. In response, we stopped receiving fire. The thunder of the Sheriff’s people and the militia firing was moving closer too. This bunch was boxed up tight and apparently failed to realize that they could escape US 54 into an open area and possibly avoid detection. I can only conclude that they didn’t know the area.

Dick must not have had a chance to complete the children’s’ training. Ron got a stove-pipe and he was out of action. I grabbed his rifle yanked the bolt back hard, cleared the action and returned his rifle. “Velda, make a note; we have to finish up the kid’s training before this happens again.”

“What are you babbling about?”

“Nothing, keep shooting.”

“I don’t have a target.”

“Sue, switch to your M1A and lay down covering fire.”

Do you remember the line out of Top Gun where Stinger says to ready cats 3 and 4 and launch Willard and Simpkins?

“Both Catapults are broken Sir.”

“How long will it take?”

“It’ll take ten minutes.”

“Bull shit ten minutes! This thing will be over in two minutes! Get on it!”

It came to mind because a minute later all of the firing stopped.

“Unit 12, stand down, the situation is under control.”

o

The Sheriff did a short after action debrief. He credited Dick and Mary with blocking the road and making the outcome possible. Then, he offered Dick a job as a Deputy. I held my breath, but Dick declined. The Sheriff then offered him a position as a Reserve Deputy and he could stay right here on the farmstead.

When Dick, accept his offer, I suggested, “It couldn’t hurt to have an extra Reserve Deputy here.”

The Asian Question – Chapter 27

“Are you sure?”

“Yeah, go for it. Then if the ATF shows up, we can claim you own all of the NFA weapons.”

“Well... fine.”

After the mess on the road was cleaned up and the militia and Sheriff's people had returned to Alamogordo, I managed to corner Dick to discuss the kids.

“Ron had a smokestack jam and was uncertain how to clear it.”

“Oh, he knows how, I taught him. The problem probably was that he simply lacked the strength to pull back hard enough on the bolt.”

“If that's the case, we'd better not let the children operate alone.”

“Good point. The only thing that's worse to handle is a case separation or a misfire that lodges a bullet in the bore. I'll locate cleaning kit for the M16 that they can carry to clear the bores. I'll also have to come up with case extractors. Mary and I will keep working with them until they can do it all in their sleep.”

“Can Ron work the action on the Browning?”

“Barely, but yes. I don't want to have him carrying cocked and locked, so we'll work on that too.”

“He got that guy with the RPG in the shoulder, you know. The boy really saved our bacon. You tell your kids that those rifles and pistols are theirs to keep. If I can find them M1As, I intend to buy them for when they're bigger.”

“Let's ask the Sheriff what they came up with when they collected the weapons from that bunch we took care of earlier.”

“I'll phone. We'll want 4 M1As and another pair of M16s.”

“Barry Ryan, is the Sheriff in? I'll hold.”

“Sheriff, what did you come up with weapons on that bunch we stopped today? Oh, 4 M1As and a pair of M16s. Yes, I could live with 1 HK91 and 2 M1As, what about M16s? Are the HBARS Colt? Yeah, that will work, any chance we could get them? No, I don't need a lot of M1A magazines but I'll take all of the M16 and HK91 magazines you can spare. At least 10 per weapon. What about ammo? Is that all? Fine 2 cases of 7.62 and

one of 5.56. We'll be into Alamogordo within the hour. We'll take any .50 caliber belted you can find.

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“The question in every case is whether the words used are used in such circumstances and are of such a nature as to create **a clear and present danger** that they will bring about the substantive evils that Congress has a right to prevent. It is a question of proximity and degree. When a nation is at war, many things that might be said in time of peace are such a hindrance to its effort that their utterance will not be endured so long as men fight, and that no Court could regard them as protected by any constitutional right.”

The 1919 Supreme Court decision in *Schenck* was reversed in 1951 in *Dennis* and restored in 1969 in *Brandenburg*. The *Brandenburg* decision changed the test to the imminent lawless action test. In the original case, Holmes said, “The most stringent protection of free speech would not protect a man falsely shouting fire in a theater and causing a panic.”

It came up because that evening, Sue put on the old Harrison Ford movie based on Tom Clancy's story, *A Clear and Present Danger*. It was nice having the net back up and I was curious where the expression first came from. How they managed to convert the test for freedom of speech into part of the plot for an action movie was a mystery.

o

The adaptation that Dick had worked out to install the M203s on the M1As, proved to be unsatisfactory because, although it worked, it moved the center of gravity of the weapon too far forward. Instead, we used the things out of the SOPMOD kit to mount the M203s on the AR-15s. Mary and Dick took the 2 M1As. The extra HK91 made it to my rifle rack in the OP. We could get adapters but the supply of Surefire suppressors had totally dried up. The easiest thing to do was to install adapters on all of the 7.62 weapons that lacked one.

It might be appropriate here to list the weapons in our armories: 2 M1A Loadeds; 2 HK91s; 1 M-40; 2 11-97 with magazine extensions; 2 10/22s; 2 Browning Hi Power; 2 M1911s; 1 MP5; and, 1 M2HB. Dick and Mary had, including the kids, had: 1 M1911; 1 Remington 870; 1 Marlin model 39A; 2 Beretta 92FS; 2 M16A3; 2 Colt AR-15 HBAR, 2 Browning Hi-Powers; and 2 M1As. In addition to the weapons, we had 12 M18A1 Claymore mines, a substantial quantity of concussion, fragmentation and smoke hand grenades, 4 M203s and a substantial supply of 40mm grenades, hand grenades and the LAWs. You might say that if you wanted trouble, this was the right place to visit.

“Can you get any more of the Claymores?”

“Barry, that’s hard to say, I can call, but it would depend on what my friend in Logistics can come up with. Expendables are always easier to get than equipment. Anything else you’d want?”

“If you can get suppressors for those AR-15s, I wouldn’t mind and if you could come up with some Surefire 7.62mm suppressors, we could always use 4 more.”

“The standard SOPMOD kit doesn’t contain the suppressor, those are separate. As for the Surefire suppressors, I don’t know if they even have any. I’ll try.”

o

With our latest acquisitions from the Sheriff, everyone had at least two shoulder weapons, a primary rifle and a backup. A County crew cleaned up the destroyed vehicles and patched the highway. I was beginning to realize why no one had wanted the place back in the late ‘90s – road noise and bad traffic. In 20 years, assuming we lived that long, it wouldn’t make a bit of difference. That last adventure was a mix of bad luck and good luck. Good because they passed us by and bad because they came back. The best piece of luck was Ron hitting that guy with the RPG in the shoulder just as he fired. The grenade can penetrate up to 330mm of steel.

“Sue, how would you feel about planting some trees between the house and the road?”

“What did you have in mind?”

“You could call it a wind break or anything that suited your fancy, Sue. We need something that grows fast. Maybe some poplars.”

“You’re being foolish, dear. It will take those trees 2-4 years to get established and big enough to provide any cover.”

“It has been nearly a year, and I see things getting worse, not better. This area isn’t getting any attention because the Chinese didn’t hit it. In case you haven’t noticed, this last group was by far the largest. Einstein said that he didn’t know what weapons they’d use to fight WW III, but they’d use clubs to fight WW IV. In my heart, I truly believe that this is the beginning, not the end.”

“Are you saying that even though we survived the attack, it’s the end of the world?”

“I wouldn’t go that far. I will go so far as to suggest that it will take a number of years to restore civilization, as we’ve known it. I think we can grow a herd of livestock and meet our needs for food, especially with Dick and Mary to help. I also think it will be worse than having gold and silver. Unless we can turn the country around, food is going to become precious, especially meat.”

“What kind of trees do you want?”

“Lombardy poplars grow fast and if you space them close together present quite a barrier.”

o

Allow me to say that sometimes the ideas I get are a whole lot of work to implement. I had the idea to grow our own alfalfa and Dick was left to manage that. He found ground feed for the livestock and had to arrange to store it in the loft of the barn. Sue went to town and found the poplars but I had to plant them. I decided on 3 rows with the plants and rows spaced 3' apart. When they filled in, the trees would be better than having a living stonewall.

I'm too old for this crap. I was busy weeding the garden, planting trees and growing blisters. Sue attended the next meeting at the Sheriff's office and reported that the general sentiment was that that bunch we'd taken out was the major gang in the area. With them gone, we should be secure. I kept planting trees, we might be done for a while, but my gut told me it wouldn't last. I may be slow, but I'm not stupid and was still learning. In some ways, things were about the same as before the war, but in others, we'd gone around a dark corner and had entered a period of unrest unrivaled in American history.

The plants were about 6' tall. According to the pamphlet that came with the trees, they'd take up to 10 years to turn into a solid barrier. Fine, it would take the same period of time to really build a large herd of livestock. I discussed it with Sue and we sat Mary and Dick down at the kitchen table to tell them how we saw things.

“Dick, I've decided that we're going to use whatever land we need to grow feed. The farm operation will be totally your responsibility. You'd better start to lie in supplies of what seed you think you're going to need. If you need equipment, Sue and you can go shopping. My pension finally hit but I'm still behind on my disability payments. It's almost unimportant because of the inflation. If you do get equipment, get used. You need to establish a breeding program to increase our herd. I don't want to develop a siege mentality, here. Our only son, Barry Jr. died and we don't have any family to inherit what we have when we're gone. We've drawn up papers transferring what we have to Mary and you when the time comes.”

“I left the farm to join the Army, Barry. I never planned on being a farmer.”

“Neither did I. If you had told me 10 years ago I'd be shoveling manure, I'd have said you were crazy. Sue tells me that the fuel we have stored is the last we're going to see for a very long time. It would seem that we're going to need to come up with an alternative means of generating electricity; the fuel is too valuable to run the generators unless we can get more. It took them from August until June to get the electricity back up and we can't count on it lasting.”

“What kind of arrangement do you want to have?”

“How about a full share, 50-50? When we’re gone it will all be yours.”

“Where are the kids going to go to school?” Mary asked.

“Tularosa had an Elementary, Middle and High School. I don’t know if they’ll have bus service, but they’re only a couple of miles away.”

“I’m inclined to say yes, Barry, but let Mary and me talk it over.”

“How did you make out down at Ft. Bliss with your friend in supply?”

“It cost Sue 6 ounces of gold, but I got everything on your list and a lot of ammo. He said that they were running into resupply problems and that this would probably be the last time he had anything available to let go. That’s how he does it, creating shortages in incoming shipments.”

“Did you get all of the rifles suppressed?”

“I did, but I couldn’t get suppressors for the pistols. The one thing on your list I didn’t get was M18A1 mines.”

“Can we rig the 12 we have to protect the driveway?”

“Six on each side?”

“If that’s what you’d recommend. We could make them remotely detonated from the OP.”

“I’ll take care of it. How big of a herd to you want to grow?”

“We’ll keep all of the female cattle and up to 20 sows. We’ll have to get breeding stock to become independent. I think we’re going to have to dry lot the livestock, that high chaparral won’t provide much feed.”

o

This was all working out well with Dick being a Reserve Deputy but no duties off the farm/ranch. We had legitimacy to our having the NFA weapons and as you know by now, we had our share. In time, the Mini-14s were retired from the kids’ primary weapon to their secondary weapon. They moved up to the Colt HBARs and it didn’t seem to matter to them that the weapons weren’t capable of burst or continuous fire. That Susan took a growth spurt and she was nearly as tall as Mary. I figured it was just a matter of time before Ron added a foot to his size. It was like those trees I planted, just a matter of time.

The Asian Question – Chapter 28

It had been a while since I'd had time to make notes in my journal, what with harvesting and canning and helping Dick get the baled hay into the barn. The kids started school last week and we were most fortunate, bus service was available. Dick said we couldn't breed the 2 fillies until age 3. We passed the first anniversary of the attack on the United States and of course, we had a new Congress and Obama edged out McCain. I can only think that it was a party thing, but I was sure that with the big cities gone, McCain was a shoo-in. It wouldn't be the first time I'd voted for the loser and probably not the last.

The Democrat Party had been making huge promises about rebuilding the country and putting food on everyone's table. They had pushed through legislation almost immediately raising taxes. I didn't care; a person had to have an income to be subject to an income tax. At least they resumed Social Security payments. That bank gave us a choice of Federal Reserve notes at face value or gold at \$1,600 an ounce. We took the gold. Between my pension and the Disability, we were pulling out about 1½ ounces of gold per month.

One thing that no one had counted on was the brisk trade in ration stamps. I wasn't alive in WW II so I don't know how it worked then, but these ration stamps sort of looked like Food Stamps and weren't assigned to an individual. Most of the things we wanted weren't rationed to begin with and how many sets of tires do you need? Sue and Mary went to the store shopping about once a month and when they were there would trade off the ration coupons they didn't need to people in exchange for things they did want. You may recall that New Mexico grows pinto beans, right? Bumper crop this year, despite the lower than normal temperatures.

Labor Day was just that, another day of labor. The kids were out of school so they helped in the garden. We'd replanted some crops and were getting a second harvest. We were running out of mason jars and none of the people in Alamogordo were willing to part with their used spaghetti sauce jars this year. We bought what we could and ended up freezing some vegetables that we normally canned. After checking around about getting the steer and the hogs butchered, Dick and I concluded that we'd have to do it ourselves. We decided to wait until October when it was cold so the meat didn't spoil. He'd used some of the surplus plywood in the machine shed to construct a smoke house and we'd brine and smoke the hams, picnics and bacon ourselves.

We'd butchered chickens in July and kept 2-dozen hens for layers. Word was that pullets would be available this coming year so we didn't try to grow our own chicks. Once we'd figured out what it would cost to have custom work done, we also concluded we'd be better off with our own farm equipment. We'd started with a Ford tractor and a broadcast seeder. Then while the alfalfa was growing, found a mower and repaired the sickle bar and ledger plates. We finally found a pull type twine baler and several rolls of twine. Dick let the bales drop in the field and later, we used 2 wagons to load and haul the hay to the barn. Sue drove the tractor, I worked the wagon and Dick lifted the bales

up from the ground. If anyone ever tells you that hard work won't kill you, don't believe him.

"I'm tired."

"Good, once you get those jars down to the basement you can take the rest of the day off."

"How much did you get canned today?"

"Six batches of 14 jars each, 7 cases. That second crop of cucumbers looks like they're about ready to make into pickles. Do you want more bread and butter, or do you want dill or sweet pickles?"

"Could you do half dill and half sweet? I prefer sweet on my peanut butter sandwiches."

"I can do whatever you want, Barry. We should get about 21 quarts of each."

"That's a lot of pickles."

"You forget that we're feeding 6 mouths, not 2. Did Dick and you decide when you were going to butcher?"

"I thought I told you. We'll butcher when it gets cold so we can hang the meat in the machine shed to age. We're going to butcher the steer and 3 pigs. Dick says he can get that female pig bred and we can have 10 pigs next year. How are we doing on food?"

"You can't imagine what a difference it makes churning your own butter and producing your own cheese. About the only thing we use a ration coupon for is to buy sugar."

o

Frankly, I'm surprised that gold has stayed as low as it has. Back in the '97-'01 time period, gold was under \$300. By December of '05, it had topped \$500 an ounce. The current trading was at \$1,600 an ounce and the banks were back to dealing in gold and silver. Silver had slowly slid up to almost \$20 an ounce. I had expected gold to top \$1,800 by the end of the year, but the banker said that he doubted it would. When we pulled our money out each month, we sort of mixed it up, sometimes taking 3 ½ ounce Eagles, other times taking 6 ¼ ounce and sometimes taking 15 1/10th ounce coins. One month we took silver to have money to do our buying with.

It snowed in early September and Sue did manage to get Dick and Mary's propane topped off. We bought that coal back in spring and now I was back to shoveling. The snow stopped the growing season dead in its tracks. We had no more than got the potatoes out of the ground than we got 3" of snow. Temperatures vary with elevation. At higher elevations, 7,000 feet and up, summer nights are a chilly 40°F and days are a

warm 78°F, while winter temperatures can drop to 15°F at night and rise to 40-50°F during the day. At lower elevations, 6,000-7,000 feet, winter temperatures rarely fall below 0°F and usually run from the teens to 50°F. Summer temperatures range from 50° to 85°F. At the lowest elevations, 4,000 to 6,000 feet, temperatures are generally 10° higher throughout the year. Are you interested in the history of our area?

250 million years ago, a shallow sea that covered most of eastern New Mexico covered what is now the Tularosa Basin. Marine deposits and sediment filled the bottom of this shallow sea. These sediments would eventually form the gypsum-bearing sedimentary deposit that gave birth to White Sands. 70 million years ago, as the Rocky Mountains were being formed, this area was uplifted out of the ancient sea and formed a dome. Beginning 10 million years ago, the center of the dome began to collapse, forming the Tularosa Basin. The remaining sides of the dome are what we now see as the San Andres and Sacramento mountain ranges forming the perimeter of the Tularosa Basin.

Gypsum normally is not found in the form of sand. Gypsum is soluble in water, thus it is normally dissolved by rain and snow and flushed out to sea. Gypsum in the sedimentary rock layers in the mountains surrounding the Tularosa Basin was dissolved by rain and snow and carried into the basin. The Tularosa Basin has no natural drainage. Water that enters the basin either sinks into the ground or pools in low points within the basin. Lake Lucero is just such a low spot.

Gypsum-rich waters have collected in Lake Lucero for the past 10 million years. As the waters have collected and evaporated, gypsum got deposited on the surface of Lake Lucero in crystalline form, called selenite. In geologic history, there have been cycles that were very wet, followed by times of evaporation. This allowed the formation of very long crystals of selenite, some up to three feet long. These crystals eventually get broken down by wind, freezing and thawing and eventually form sand-size particles that are carried by the prevailing winds forming the dunes that we know as White Sands. I thought you might be wondering where the white sand came from, I was curious when we moved here.

The White Sands National Monument is a US National Monument located about 25km (15 miles) southwest of Alamogordo. The area is in the mountain-ringed Tularosa Basin valley area and comprises the southern part of a 710km² (275-square mile) field of white sand dunes composed of hypsum crystals. From the visitor center at the entrance of the park, the Dunes Drive leads 8 miles (12 km) into the dunes. Four marked trails allow you to explore the dunes by foot. During the summer, there used to be Ranger-guided orientation and nature walks. In areas accessible by car, kids frequently use the dunes for sledding downhill. The park lies completely within the White Sands Missile Range, and both the park and the US 54 between the park and Las Cruces may be closed for safety reasons while tests are conducted on the missile range. On average, this used to happen about twice a week, with a duration of one to two hours.

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In the classic rules of war, in particular in many of the Christian theological systems, asymmetric warfare is completely moral in and of itself, all other rules of war being obeyed. This entails:

- Noncombatants cannot be attacked
- The war is a properly declared war, with an accountable authority on both sides who can also put an end to the war.

What it is also called is 4th Generation Warfare. Fourth generation warfare directly attacks the will of the technologically advantaged opponent to prevail in the conflict.

These groups that were attacking farms, ranches and small communities were not following the classical rules of war. It was evident because they weren't following the rules outlined above. They'd sneak into a community and begin to remove resistance. When the principal resistance, mostly law enforcement or National Guard was removed, citizens were attacked, individually or in groups. When they hit a ranch or farm, they seemed to be depending on raw strength. While our area hadn't been hit since that attack in spring, other areas weren't so fortunate. The Saturday after Labor Day, the Sheriff called another meeting.

"Listen up, people. I SAID LISTEN UP! We've had a good harvest and the groups out there have left us alone during the summer. Intelligence indicates that their pattern is to select a small community and go to ground until the weather warms up. We have no idea of whether or not they'll try to do that in Otero County. If they do, it would seem likely that Bent, Three Rivers or one of the other outlying communities could be a likely target. I want to institute reinforced patrols through the winter. That will mean that those among you who are Reserve Deputies will be asked put in 3 days a week."

"Our second step will be to station well-armed groups in the small communities capable of providing some resistance in the event of an attack. Again, we can use the militia. For those of you familiar with the old militia, our new organization is far different. We have removed most of the white supremacists and ultra conservatives and are aligned with the New Mexico State Guard; a State Defense Force component of the New Mexico State Military Forces authorized under Chapter 20, New Mexico statutes amended, 1978. The New Mexico State Guard, New Mexico Army National Guard and the New Mexico Air National Guard form the triad of active elements of the New Mexico Department of Military Affairs (NM-DOMA) under the Adjutant General of New Mexico."

"As you know, the age limits for service in the State Defense Force are 18 to 64. We need several different skills if we are to defend Otero County. Those of you in the upper age brackets will assume the duties of observers. Younger men and women, especially those with recent military experience will be utilized either as officers, non-commissioned officers or as members of the Sheriff's Reserve. I have handouts on the requirement for the New Mexico State Defense on the table. Please take one on your way out. While this is rather short notice, we'd like to have everyone's answer within 10 days. That all I have at the moment. Barry could Dick and you stop by my office?"

Dick and I were sitting in the back with Sue and Mary, making every effort to not be noticed. Crap, he'd seen us and wanted to visit with us. I was thinking about maybe harvesting a few trees and building our supply of firewood because Sue said we couldn't get coal next year. I knew it was a mistake to wear my \$600 cowboy hat.

"Yes, Sheriff, can we help you?"

"I'm primarily interested in visiting with Dick, Barry. Dick how would you feel about turning in your badge and taking a position with the State Defense Force as a Sergeant First Class?"

"I was only an E-5 Sergeant in the Army, Sheriff."

"Your experience is the most current of anyone available. You've only been out a few months and according to your records, you completed the NCO Academy, or whatever they call it these days. The Adjutant General approved the promotion. Can we count on you?"

"Sheriff, I've attended a few of your meetings and I must say you're a man of few words. How soon do you have to know?"

"I can give you 15 minutes."

"Excuse us then, I'll be back."

"Mary, what do you say?"

"It's up to you, honey."

"Barry, can you spare me?"

"What's left to do?"

"Feed the livestock, milk the cow and clean up the manure."

"Darn, I knew it. Sure why not, I love smelling like the barn."

"Barry, it will give you an excuse to drink up the Bud," Sue chuckled.

"In case you haven't notice the only time I had any beer was on the 4th of July. I didn't even get a chance on Labor Day, we were so busy."

"I'll tell the Sheriff yes, and get the details," Dick suggested.

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Man, was it cold that night. The forecast said mainly clear skies. Low 26°F. Winds light and variable. Feels like 21°. And when it felt like 21°, it was still up at 28°. That was going to put the frost on the pumpkins and I added extra scoops of coal to the furnace. I was thinking that we'd better get those hogs and steer butchered before Dick took off for the Defense Force. We had only wanted to wait until November because of cold weather and if this didn't qualify, I can't tell you what would. The expected high on Sunday was going to be in the mid-50s. This was about the only time I missed California and considering that LA had been blown to hell and kingdom come, I'd live with the cold.

Of course the living room window where we had the Ma Deuce set up didn't have a storm window and that side of the living room tended to be drafty. I tried to keep a fat log on the fireplace to compensate. Wait a minute, if Dick is off playing soldier, how are we going to cut wood? And if we kill and skin the beef and hogs, I wonder who is going to end up cutting the meat up?

"Sue, would you check with the grocery store in Alamogordo tomorrow and see if you can find someone to cut and wrap our meat?"

"I thought Dick and you were going to do that."

"We were, but he's going to be gone by the time the meat is ready to cut up. Tell them we have 2 sides of beef and 3 hogs. We want the hams, picnics and bacon cut out so I can cure and smoke them and the remainder of the meat cut and wrapped."

"Do you know how to cure and smoke the meat?"

"I don't have a clue, but the Internet is back up. You could ask if they do that, but I think they get their smoked and cured products from the packing plant."

She found a guy who would cut and wrap the meat. She asked me what bacon cuts I wanted and I told her I didn't have a clue, whatever it was we bought in the store. I took the meat in the following Wednesday and went back on Thursday to get the meat I had to cure. I concluded that the easiest thing to do was brine cure the meat and then smoke it. Sue suggest that I add a little honey and it would produce honey cured, or sweet bacon and ham. Sounded good to me, I always wondered what a honey cured ham was anyway. After soaking the meat the prescribed time in the brine, I started a smoldering fire in the smoke house with hickory chips and smoked it as recommended. The proof would come on Christmas when we tried the first ham.

The Asian Question – Chapter 29

In early October, Three Rivers got hit. The only thing in Three Rivers was that burned out of a shell of a building. That was probably where the militia unit was. I was in the OP monitoring the radio out of one ear and listening to Fox News with the other. Fox didn't give a clue where they were broadcasting from, probably a local station's extra studio. I didn't recognize the new announcer either. He was talking about the cleanup in Dallas, very uninteresting.

"Dispatch, Unit 1."

"Dispatch."

"Mayday. Unit 1 is being overrun by an unfriendly force, Mayday."

"Roger Unit 1, forces being dispatched from Tularosa and Alamogordo. You'll have half in 15 minutes and the remainder in 25."

"Dispatch, we don't hav..."

The remainder of the transmission ended with the sound of gunfire.

"Unit 1, Dispatch. Unit 1, Dispatch. Aw, crap."

I kicked my awareness level up a notch, dumped Fox and turned the radio a little louder, hoping against hope that Three Rivers hadn't been overrun. About the only thing a radio is good for is to transmit your message of despair. I listened as units of the militia were dispatched to back up the cars in route to Three Rivers. Three Rivers is about 17 miles north of Tularosa on US 54 and it's not a town. It was once a part of a ranch owned by Susan Barber, known as the "Cattle Queen of New Mexico". It isn't even listed as one of the communities in Otero County on Wikipedia.

Dispatch kept trying to reach Unit 1 but Three Rivers was off the air. One of these days Dispatch is going to call us and if we haven't been overrun, we'll be too busy shooting to answer. It looks like those poplars might make it through the winter and by this time next year, could be 7-8' tall. One, if we live that long, they'll reach 50-70' and put a solid barrier between the house and the road. By the way, Dick's unit was assigned to Tularosa so he made it home most nights.

The call finally came in from the units dispatched to Three Rivers. Nada. There wasn't a single soul to be found, on either side. Whoever it was even took the SINCGARS radio and antenna. Within an hour, everyone received a message to change the TSK setting on the radios. That brought to mind an interesting question, the SINCGARS had to be set to the correct time within 4 seconds and that was accomplished with the GPS function. Was the government still putting up GPS satellites? There are at least 24 GPS sat-

ellites and the military replaces 2 per year, the failure rate. I didn't really know the answer, but the SINCGARS still worked and it depended on the GPS data.

What the Hell? It wasn't a lot of people, but there was a militia unit there. It didn't bode well if we lost the Three Rivers OP and that SINCGARS radio. It seemed obvious to me that things in the County weren't good when they changed the SINCGARS frequency hopping codes. Dick could explain when he got home this evening.

"Well?"

"Well what?"

"What's the story up in Three Rivers?"

"You tell me. The place was a ghost town"

"All I heard was they're response getting cut off in what I took to be a hail of gunfire, Dick."

"Barry, that means that you know as much as the rest of us do. I'm not holding anything back."

"I wasn't suggesting that you were."

"The hell you weren't."

"Now you hold your horses, Richard. We had to change the Transmission Security Keys."

"That's SOP whenever we lose a SINCGARS radio. You know that. You also know that we lost the militia unit and their equipment. We haven't gotten any instructions from the Sheriff that he's going to replace that unit. Is that what you're asking?"

"To tell you the truth, my friend, I don't have a clue what I'm asking. I suppose what I wanted to know was if it was reasonable to conclude that we have a problem here in Otero County?"

"That, sir, is a reasonable presumption. Anytime you lose an armed militia unit and all of their equipment, it is fair to presume that the crap is getting deep. I'm not telling you that I'm sleeping with my lights on tonight. But let me ask you if Rex is a really good watch dog."

"If our previous experience is any guide, I have to answer that in the affirmative."

"If he is, we might not have to maintain a watch tonight. That being said, if you're not 100% sure, it might be a good idea."

“You going to take care of the livestock in the morning?”

“I am.”

“Then I’m staying up.”

“I was really hoping that you’d say that.”

“Then is it fair for me to presume that you’re concerned?”

“Anytime you lose a unit of trained, armed people and their equipment, there’s room for concern.”

“Do you believe that we’re going to have visitors?”

“If they come on down from Three Rivers, probably not because we’re off to the east here on US 54. And, there is Salinas between Three Rivers and here. That being said, keeping an extra watch is not a bad idea. I don’t like it when one of our forward Observation Posts just disappears. If they followed the railroad tracks, they’d bypass our post at the junction because the railroad goes straight while the road curves. I’ll give the post a call on the radio before I turn in and suggest that they keep one eye on the railroad tracks.”

“In your absence, I figured out how to let you know at your trailer if we have a problem. I put in an old-fashioned doorbell ringer that you have to get up to shut off. If it rings, we have trouble.”

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”When you go to bed tonight, leave the coffee on.”

“Are you staying up?”

“I think that I will. Dick seemed to think it might be a good idea what with the OP up in Three Rivers disappearing.”

“Did you check the weather?”

“No, why?”

“It’s supposed to snow.”

“Again? Darn. I may not stay up all night. If I see it start snowing, I’ll give it up because no one would be out in weather like that.”

“Isn’t the Sheriff going to replace the missing unit?”

“Haven’t heard. If I were he, I would. That attack and disappearance simply highlights the need. However, the group in Tularosa should be large enough to stop anyone coming through.”

“Can’t they bypass Tularosa by staying on the railroad tracks or a little further west?”

“Dick and I considered that. He was going to advise Unit 4 (Tularosa) to keep an eye on the tracks.”

“Good night. Let me know if anything happens.”

I got a Coke and my favorite snack, a handful of dry roasted peanuts mixed with original Fritos. The TV was on, they were showing *Strategic Air Command* with James Stewart and Frank Lovejoy. It was more than obvious that Lovejoy was playing the role of Curtis E. LeMay (General Hawks in the film). The latest aircraft was the B-47. As Dutch Holland was retiring because of his shoulder, I looked up and saw the snow. I turned on the outside lights and it was coming down by the bucket load. Even an idiot would know better to be out in that storm, and I went to bed.

“Unit 4, Unit 1. I’m shutting down for the night.”

“Unit 1, Unit 4. Roger.”

The militia was an all-volunteer unit that typically put in 8 on and 24 off. Most of these people had regular jobs and to ensure the area was safe, employers adjusted their methods of doing business. With 168 hours in a full week, a person never repeated the same shift. If you were on 1st shift on Monday (8am-4pm), your next shift would be 2nd shift (4pm-12pm) Tuesday, followed by 3rd shift Wednesday (12pm-8am) and 1st shift Friday. Since most Sheriff’s units used a staggered shift and coverage was always available. By contrast we usually ran a shift from 10am up to midnight with time out to do chores.

When Sue wasn’t occupied with something, she covered me to let me get lunch, shovel coal, use the john or whatever. Dick and Mary had their SINCGARS and other radios on a small desk in their living room where anyone in the house could hear them. Some of the quilting was purely handwork and she did that in the OP instead of watching TV. A quilt was a tremendous amount of work and involved selecting a pattern, the material, cutting the pieces and assembly. Once it was assembled, she add the batting and backing and quilted it all together. The last step was adding the binding to seal the edges. She had a small label of her own that went in a back corner and if the customer wanted, a larger gift label could be added. While she averaged 4 quilts a year, a baby quit took very little time while the king sized quilt might take 4 months or longer, depending on the pattern. It was a nice hobby that generated about \$4,000 and up a year, net of the materials.

The Asian Question – Chapter 30

That night before I went to bed, I was on the Internet, trying for the 100th time to find the lyric to a song that had been bouncing around in my head since probably before I was born. The title of the song was 'More'. Well, guess what:

More – Theme from "Mondo Cane"

*More than the greatest love the world has known,
This is the love I'll give to you alone,
More than the simple words I try to say,
I only live to love you more each day.
More than you'll ever know,
My arms long to hold you so,
My life will be in your keeping,
Waking, sleeping, laughing, weeping.
Longer than always is a long, long time,
But far beyond forever you'll be mine.
I know I never lived before,
and my heart is very sure,
No one else could love you more.*

I was searching for the wrong thing, I searched for *More*. This time I searched for *the greatest love the world has known*. Darn. The movie *Mondo Cane* was rated R and was a perverse look at some of the savage/bizarre parts of our existence. No way could I recommend it. When you read the lyric, you can see why I couldn't get the song out of my mind. Kind of put me in a frisky mood, which I'm sure Sue didn't appreciate.

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I'm more interested in the snow; it was snowing when I went to bed and still snowing when I got up. What is going on? 2004 was a record year for natural disasters at \$145 billion in losses, and then came 2005 with losses exceeding \$200 billion. The year 2005 stood out not only for losses, but several firsts on the weather front. Hurricane Wilma was the strongest hurricane ever, while Hurricane Vince was the first-ever hurricane to approach Europe, making landfall in Spain in October. In 2004, the southernmost hurricane was recorded in Brazil.

The record-breaking losses were announced on the sidelines of the United Nations conference to tackle global warming, which many scientists blame for the destructive weather patterns of recent years. "There is a powerful indication from these figures that we are moving from predictions of the likely impacts of climate change to proof that is already underway," said foundation head Thomas Loster.

You don't suppose that WW III had triggered a climate change, do you? Something was going on. Dick had to put chains on his truck to get to Tularosa the following day. He

was back in 3 hours; they decided that no one could move in this weather. He driven to town, talked for 5 minutes and headed home. That's how bad it was, 3 hours round trip to go a short couple of miles each way.

"Dispatch, Unit 12."

"Dispatch."

"Unit 12. We're shutting down and so is Unit 4. Have you ever heard of the 9' Indian? We have 24" of snow and it's still coming down. Nothing is moving in this weather."

"Roger Unit 12."

"Dispatch, any news on Unit 1?"

"Negative, they called the search on account of the weather."

I can't say that Sue agreed, not after I'd wakened her the night before. And then, around 10am, the generator kicked in. I was guessing ice on the power lines. It really wasn't that cold and the diesel had PRI-Flow. I added extra coal to the furnace and built a fire in the fireplace. Sue had planned on baking bread and the house wasn't warm enough for it to rise. Susan and Ron were out playing in that stuff.

"Dick, what do you want, coffee or a beer?"

"In this kind of weather? Coffee, please."

"Global Climate change?"

"More like a winter snow storm. We can't have a global climate change, George Bush would never approve."

"I know, but it isn't even the first of October. As this time last year, we were just out of the shelter and worried about radiation."

"True and some of us were joking that Bush would be President for life."

"I think he had a belly full. He was barely in his first term when 9/11 happened. Then there was the War on Terror. Who won that war anyway? Finally, 3 months before the election, he started the war with China."

"Can't say as I agree with your characterization, Barry. The Republic of China started it with their Declaration of Independence. The People's Republic acted as predicted and Bush just answered the call for help. It could have been worse, you know. What if all of their weapons had gotten through?"

“Slim consolation for the people living in those metropolitan areas.”

“Used to live, you mean.”

“Did they ever get a final death count?”

“I don’t believe they did. The estimates were in the 30-35 million range and with as many illegals as we have in this country, we may never know.”

“Did you feed the stock?”

“Yes and I added more chips to the smokehouse. I pulled the bacon because it was done. December 7th will be the 68th Anniversary of Pearl Harbor.”

“Huh? What brought that up?”

“I was reading an old article out of the Washington Times. I was unpacking a box and found some of my gun stuff wrapped in paper. Anyway, the article said:

“This week is a reminder of the power of surprise as a tactic and the folly of complacency as a strategy. Sixty-four years ago today, imperial Japan launched the first of two surprise attacks, striking an unsuspecting United States Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor. Incredibly, the very next day Japan’s air attack caught US forces in the Philippines napping. Forty-four months later, Japan capitulated ending World War II.

“On Monday, the September 11 commission issued its final report on that attack.

“In blunt terms, the commissioners warned that America was still unprepared for disaster. The failed response to Hurricane Katrina was dramatic evidence for that conclusion.

“Today, Iraq is a sorcerer’s hotbed of danger, and no one can predict al Qaeda’s plans. So, are future December 7th and September 11th lurking ahead? Gov. Tom Kean, chairman of the September 11 commission says the answer is “when” not “whether”. What is surprising about Iraq is how often we have been surprised.

“Liberation turned into occupation. An insurgency in its last throes now seems impervious to countermeasure. Treatment of enemy combatants at Abu Ghraib and other detention sites has become a national disgrace. Now, two huge potential surprises have been inadvertently sown in the strategy for victory in Iraq announced last week by President Bush at the Naval Academy. One lies in the transfer of responsibility for security to Iraqis. The second rests in allowing conditions on the ground to dictate policy.

“Success in Iraq depends on the capability of the new government, elected next week, and its military, police and security forces to quell the insurgency. That means understanding that deficiencies in Iraqi security forces regarding training, leadership and lo-

gistical and fire support, even if corrected, can lead to severe unintended consequences.

“Training can move only so quickly. To date, the pace has been painfully slow. To close the gap in leadership, junior officers in Saddam Hussein's former army are being recruited and, one hopes, shorn of old, bad habits. Training must indoctrinate both new and old recruits in the ways of democracy, liberty and the sanctity of human rights.

“All of this will take additional time, possibly more than events on the ground will permit, and will require booster shots to ensure the training holds. If allegations of Iraqi security forces' brutal treatment of prisoners are correct, this indoctrination will not be easy.

“Logistical support is being put in place to allow Iraqi forces to operate independently. But the American military does not want to create a future Iraqi army that can threaten its neighbors. So, fire support in the form of Iraqi artillery, tactical aircraft and heavy armor is likely to be modest.

“Absent the necessary military capacity, and even with it, the new Iraqi government could too easily fall back on its former way of doing business – through brutality and torture. Hatred and revenge are slow to cool. And while an insurgent may be prepared to die for the cause, if that person knows that a wide circle of friends and acquaintances beyond his or her immediate family will be killed, tortured or imprisoned, behavior modification is possible. Iraq's history in this regard is far from reassuring, and the temptation to repeat it will be powerful.

“Second, if the president is taken literally and events on the ground determine future American policy, the White House has turned the great Prussian military philosopher Karl Von Clausewitz on his head. That reversal could be the grounds for another bad surprise.

“Policy must drive the use of force to achieve required aims. The aim in Iraq must be to assure that events on the ground achieve the goals we set and not random outcomes. Otherwise, security and an effective transfer of responsibility can never occur.

“Finally, it is time to heed the September 11 commission. Complacency is not an option. Yet, who has been held accountable for the failure to deliver on even the most basic of the panel's recommendations, such as information sharing and interoperable communications among first responders? The answer is no one.

“As Mr. Bush addresses the nation on Iraq and the war on terror, it is essential that he respond to these and other ticking time bombs.

“First, brutality and torture are unacceptable in dealing with the insurgency. America's record has been counterproductive and must be rectified as well. Second, the president must show how the United States is positively affecting events on the ground to assure a credible transfer of responsibility in keeping with our aims and objectives.

“Finally, urgency is needed in protecting the United States against future attack. After four years, there must be accountability and remedial action. Without these steps, other surprises, and bad ones at that, loom large.”

“When was that published?”

“December 7th 2005.”

“They must have done something right; we didn’t have a repeat of 9/11.”

“Yeah right, we had 20Aug08 at 2125 Zulu. That’s when we lost power, remember?”

“How could I forget, I wrote it down? I’d like to believe that the country has recovered. We had elections but have they cleaned the cities up? According to CNN, it could be another 9 years. You get 3,000 Rems up to a distance of 30 miles. About 10 years will need to pass before levels of radioactivity in those areas drop low enough to be considered safe, by US peacetime standards. I’d say that puts those metropolitan areas off limits for quite a while.”

“They were sending out cleanup crews when I got out.”

“So, you think it will be sooner?”

“Absolutely. The only problem I can see is where they’re going to dispose of the radioactive materials. If you recall the Yucca Mountain Affair, Nevada didn’t want the disposal site and most of the states were opposed to moving the radioactive material through their states. That was still tied up in the courts last year when the war came. How many tons of radioactive waste must there be now to dispose of?”

“Dick there isn’t a choice any longer. The environmentalists are just going to have to shut up. The needs of the many must prevail, ask Spock.”

“Unfortunately, Spock is a character in a TV series and some movies, not a real person, Barry. Some scriptwriter came up with the line *logic clearly dictates that the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few.*”

“Logic be damned. They have to clean up the country and they can’t dump the material into the ocean. This country has gotten soft with people crying over trees and spotted owls. We have oil off the California coast and a second field in Alaska. People want to drive cars but they don’t want their beach messed up by the view of an oil platform. They don’t want the radiation in their backyard and when the government finds a place to put it, they object. It’s been a lose-lose situation for a long time.”

Note: the concept in Spock’s statement can be found in the New Testament. The actual words from the movie were the first time it was stated in that manner.

The Asian Question – Chapter 31

Dick and I ended breaking out the beer later that day. I hadn't drunk a six-pack beer since I could remember. You know, I hadn't dared get a buzz on in over a year. I'm not all that good of shot to begin with but man, was it snowing. In fact, it appeared it might set records.

"The aspirin is in the cupboard."

"Why would I need aspirin?"

"For your head, the two of you sort tied one on last night."

"Sue we each drank a six-pack over the course of several hours. I realize that's more than normal, but it was snowing."

"Still is."

"Really? That means it's been snowing for over 32 hours."

With a state as large as New Mexico, though, climate varies considerably from one place to the next. Snowfall ranges from less than 2 inches annually in the lower Rio Grande Valley to as much as 300 inches in the mountains of north-central New Mexico. Measuring roughly 400 x 400 miles, it is the fourth-largest state in the nation. This weather wasn't normal. The mountains get snow, but the basin? Couldn't find my copy of Johnny Cash's song, *5' high and rising*.

Our old tractor had a 3-point hitch and came with a blade. Towards noon, Dick made it to the machine shed and mounted the blade. He spent most of the afternoon clearing the area around the buildings, but I can't see why he bothered, it was still coming down. After he had enough clear you could walk around, Mary and the kids came over. Sue had put pinto beans on to soak the night before and was planning on making chili. Sue's chili was what I'd call medium hot, just enough to make you break into a slight sweat. Good for what ails you.

"How are you getting along with the new rifle, Ron?"

"Why do I have to learn to dismantle, clean and assemble all of the different rifles?"

"I think you dad must assume that a situation may arise when you might have a weapon you don't usually shoot and be placed in a situation where you have to take care of it."

"Do you think we're going to have more criminals show up?"

“Probably not in this weather, young man. But, come spring, we could have trouble. If this storm is any indication of the kind of winter we’re going to have, people will be out early foraging for food.”

“I didn’t think food was a problem. Dad and you killed those chickens in the summer and the hogs and beef in the fall. He said our freezer is completely full. Mom was mad at Dad when he got home last night. She said she didn’t want to be married to a drunk.”

“It’s cold out there, is there coffee on?”

“Fresh pot.”

“I got most of the snow moved, but it was still coming down. I may have to do that again tomorrow.”

“Dick, I didn’t mean to get you in trouble with the wife.”

“No trouble, as long as it doesn’t happen again. What smells good?”

“Sue is making a large pot of chili.”

“Did anyone get a weather report?”

“I listened to the radio and they said the front was stalled. I haven’t seen a storm like this in the 10 years we have lived here.”

“It’s unusual. It will depend on the remainder of the winter.”

“It is late September, not December. We’re only a few days into fall; winter doesn’t come until December 21st.”

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An experimental test of the nuclear winter hypothesis nearly happened in 1971. At a diplomatic reception in Moscow, a Soviet diplomat approached an American diplomat and asked him *Would the United States stand by if we launch a nuclear attack on China?* The American immediately said, *No, we most certainly would not stand by!* The Russian was a little taken aback by this immediate and emphatic reply, and said *Perhaps you should check with your superiors on this.* The American said, *I will, but I know what their answer will be!*

The purpose of the Russian's question was to remove the ambiguity that arose after the split between the Soviet Union and the Peoples' Republic of China as to whether the US nuclear umbrella, which protected all countries not in the Soviet camp, now extended to protect China. By his reply, the American said that it did. The Soviet Union was then in an advanced stage of preparation for a nuclear attack on China's military and industrial

facilities, which would also have caused the death of at least 300 million Chinese. A few weeks later, a higher-level Russian official asked the same question of a higher-level American official and got the same answer. Finally, Leonid Brezhnev asked the same question of Henry Kissinger. He got the same answer, and decided not to go through with it. Shortly thereafter, the Chinese found out how the US saved them from nuclear attack, and on April 6, 1971, they invited the US Ping-Pong team to Peking. The rest is history.

This was probably the closest the world has come to a nuclear war since 1945, and it would not have involved nuclear detonations on the territory of the US or its allies. The yield of the detonations would likely have exceeded 300 megatons, which would have been sufficient to cause at least a mild nuclear winter. However, we would not have been prepared at that time to study it properly.

That is, until August 20, 2008...

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The issue of the weather got me back up in the OP where I sorted through my printouts until I found a copy of the TTAPS Study. The US hadn't received the required 300mT in the exchange and we didn't have massive amounts of smoke in the air. Come to think of it, China probably hadn't either. The math suggested 400 times .475mT plus 368 times 0.1mT or a total of 227mT if all of our weapons got through. We didn't have exact figures on the size of the weapons that had gotten by our ABM system but it had to be well under 300mT. Perhaps the most disquieting finding of the TTAPS study was that Relatively large climatic effects could result even from relatively small nuclear exchanges (100 to 1000mT) if urban areas were heavily targeted, because as little as 100mT is sufficient to devastate and burn several hundred of the world's major urban centers. Such a low threshold yield for massive smoke emissions, although scenario dependent, implies that even limited nuclear exchanges could trigger severe aftereffects.

You'll have to understand that the so-called TTAPS Study was an article from Science Magazine, vol. 222, entitled *Nuclear Winter: Global Consequences of Multiple Nuclear Explosions* and it wasn't nearly as long as the consequences of it being published. A follow-up study called SCOPE 28 – *The Environmental Consequences of Nuclear Winter*, 2 volumes. It concluded:

The most serious detrimental effects a nuclear war would have on the environment are radioactive fallout, depletion of the ozone layer, and the possibility of nuclear winter. The extent of the damage is hard to predict, since there are so many variables involved. For example, the range and severity of fallout from multiple nuclear explosions depends on how many warheads are exploded, whether they explode on the ground or in the air, whether there is rain soon after the explosion, which direction and how strongly the wind is blowing, what the warheads fall on, and how many megatons each warhead has. Even with the results of nuclear weapons testing, it's still difficult to predict what will happen if multiple bombs are set off in urban areas, instead of single bombs, as was the

case in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, or single bombs set off in remote and/or non-forested areas, as has been the case with the nuclear tests performed so far. The creation of a nuclear winter is even more uncertain. The original study that caused so much uproar remains controversial, but the possibility of a nuclear winter remains. While there is uncertainty in the extent and severity of long-term consequences, the short-term environmental damage can be predicted.

Nuclear winter, at its most extreme, predicts the injection of soot into the stratosphere, obscuring the sun and plunging the earth into unseasonably cold temperatures. As multiple nuclear bombs are detonated the waves of heat and pressure, and the initial fireballs, would cause conflagrations (fires covering a large area) and firestorms (smaller fires that burn intensely). The smoke and soot from these fires would blanket the stratosphere, deflecting sunlight while allowing thermal radiation from the earth to escape. Temperatures would fall as much as 10 to 20°C in the northern mid-latitudes, and as much as 35°C in some areas of this region (Turco, et al. 1990). The effect is comparable to the dust thrown up by the asteroid that is believed to have killed the dinosaurs. With a reduction of as much as 99% of sunlight (Harwell, 1984) in some places, and general overcast conditions lasting from days to over a year in the most severe simulations, most life forms on earth would suffer. On the upside of things, global warming would no longer be a concern. (Written by Ali Jones)

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At this point my journal starts to get sparse because I basically stopped taking notes. I decided to put it all down now while I still have time. I developed some sort of health issue that the Doc says is going to kill me one of these days. Let's see, it's 2019, early spring. The snowstorm we had back in 2009 was just the beginning of a terrible winter. The following year was warm and wet, something to do with a depletion of the ozone layer according to the news.

Because of the severe winter, we didn't have a single attack the entire winter of 2009-2010. It turned out to be a good thing we had as much diesel stored as we did; the power lines were down more than they were up. Sue and I discussed what we were going to do when it came time and eventually decided to give the property to Dick and Mary. We had a lawyer draw up a Living Trust of some kind and when we were both gone, they got it. They got the whole shooting match.

The price of gold finally settled somewhere around \$2,400 an ounce, but that wasn't until around '15. We kept taking my retirement and pension out in gold and saved it. With silver worth as much as it was, around \$20 an ounce, what little we needed came from spending the silver, sale of quilts and later, sales of extra livestock. We ended up farming the better part of a section of ground.

Over time, they got the supply of fuel restored and reduced and then eliminated rationing. It was probably just plain foolish, we always kept the tanks full up, using the fuel in

the small 1,000-gallon tank and refilling it. Dick figured out how to infuse more PRI products into the tanks and keep it mixed. Anyway, the fuel was still good.

On the issue of trouble on the home front, we didn't have a lot; the tough winter must have killed most of the bad guys off, most, but not all, unfortunately. We had one more run in there at the property with people coming in on US 54 from the direction of Salinis. We shot the crap out of them and those who got by ran smack dab into the militia unit there in Tularosa. We'd put out a Mayday and everyone headed in our direction.

I like to be able to say that after that incident, we didn't need guns. Well, maybe we didn't but we wore them anyway. I picked up some new leather in El Paso at El Paso Saddlery, one of their 1890 "Original" Holsters. Sue and I down shifted and she carried the short-barreled 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ " and I went with the 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". I gave my 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ " barrel revolver to Dick to wear and we bought Ron an original Ruger Vaquero with a 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ " barrel and a John Wayne rig. El Paso made the leather the Duke wore in *The Shootist*. Mary and Susan preferred to remain with pistols in their purses. These days, they carried compact .40 S&W.

They took all of that radioactive waste and buried it in an open pit mine that was about played out. Covered it over with 100' or more of earth. That was just the beginning of the end for those environmentalists, they lost a succession of battles in court and in the case of the Alaskan oil fields the US Supreme Court quoted Leonard Nimoy from the movie. The Democratic President and Congress tried to reinstitute the AWB and more. God bless the NRA, they challenged the new law and in view of the state of the nation, those conservatives Bush had packed the court with agreed and finally overturned Miller. You still needed a CCW to carry concealed, but a lot of laws bit the dust when that ruling came down.

In essence, the court said that a Remington .308 bolt action rifle could kill someone just as dead as a so-called Assault Weapon and that either guns were totally outlawed or unregulated. Writing for the Court, the Chief Justice said, guns couldn't be totally outlawed because that violated the spirit of the 2nd Amendment. You remember when the Senate rubber-stamped the appointment of John Roberts, right? The focus of the court was on, "the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." It seems that the Congress screwed the pooch when they created State Defense Forces, or militias. The only concession in the decision was the CCWs, but they became a 'shall issue' type of permit.

Speaking of the government, they upgraded the THAAD system and included small nuclear warheads. Kinetic kill vehicles hadn't worked out. It seems that the Russian ABM system used small nukes and the government finally wised up. The Russians had the V-75 SA-2 GUIDELINE, a medium to high altitude surface-to-air missile system. The 295 kg nuclear warhead used only on the SA-2E variant was believed to have a yield of 15kT. Sauce for the goose, what could they say when we equipped THAAD II with a warhead made from the B-61 bombs?

I never heard whom they got to produce pits for the new W88 warheads, but all of the D-5s were replaced. Maybe Los Alamos, they had delivered a W-88 pit back in 2003. Anyway, all of the D-5s were replaced and every warhead on the 14 SSBNs was reported to be the 475kT W-88. You knew that they took the warheads off the Peacekeepers and put them on the Minuteman III missiles, right? In the 10 years following the war, White Sands Missile Test Range and the other ranges in the area were working overtime-testing new systems.

We were wrong on the cleanup; it only took them 9 years, not 10. Cleaning up was one thing, rebuilding was quite another. Not every city was rebuilt for one of several reasons. The previous population was mostly long gone, either dead or moved far away. The road system was repaired, especially any Interstate Highways, but much of the rebuilding emphasis was on Washington, DC. It was the first area cleaned up and rebuilding started there even while they were still trying to clean up other areas. The Dems got a second term, too. As I said, I was a little surprised when they won in May 2009, but in November of 2012, they only improved their position in Congress.

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Yes sir, a lot of things have changed. They're going almost exclusively to nuclear energy for electricity these days. Congress found a place to dispose of the wastes, one of those Pacific Atolls. All of the cars these days are hybrids of some kind, most frequently diesel electrics. You know how long it takes to build a new reactor, right? Five years minimum! Westinghouse and General Electric got together and they came up with a new design that is very safe and incorporates a SCRAM function like the reactors on the submarines. I don't know they hadn't had that feature before. SCRAM rapidly (less than four seconds, by test) inserts all the control rods into the reactor core, thus halting the nuclear reaction as rapidly as possible. Sue says the earlier reactors had a SCRAM button.

About the only cars you see these days with gasoline engines are police cars. You can't outrun these babies, no way. They have big engines and by big I mean really big, 500hp or better. It's even more dangerous to be a cop in 2019, because of the Supreme Court. When they say stop, you stop, or they'll stop you DEAD in your tracks. The Constitution guaranteed everyone to a quick and speedy trial, 6th Amendment. Lawyer's ruined the system and you saw that farce they called a trial with Simpson, right? It's all been changed, if you get 5 years, you serve 5 years. The trial is usually held within 2 weeks of your arrest. That is an improvement because immediately after the war, most of the bad guys ended up getting shot.

There were a whole lot of changes in the last 10 years dealing with illegal aliens. The government rounded them all up and hauled them back to wherever they came from. They were told that if they came back, likely as not, they'd be shot. That cofounder of the Minuteman Organization ran for office in 2005, but was defeated. He turned his talents to something more productive, guarding the border. The war made a big difference,

very few people wanted to come to a nuclear wasteland. It wasn't, but apparently foreign reporters could say that because they were the first people we exported.

In another of its decisions, the Supreme Court ruled that certain types of reporting were disallowed because it was akin to shouting fire in a theatre. The Court said that with the resources available to reporters, there was no excuse for them reporting anything other than the exact truth. And they could do that once the censors told them that the information wasn't a risk to the national security. Censors? Yes, censors. They didn't prevent you from reporting the truth, provided it was true and you were free to express an opinion, as long as it was labeled as such and 'signed' e.g., identified by the author.

Some newspapers never recovered after the war, the NY Times, LA times and certain others being most notable. I can't imagine what it would have been like if we'd have had a Republican Administration; gives me shivers to think about it. Do you suppose the Chinese were targeting the newspapers instead of the cities?

Schools these days actually educate our children, go figure. George had his 'No Child Left Behind' program and the Dems had compulsory education and graduation exams. I don't get that, I thought the Dems were always so busy protecting peoples' rights to be jerks and education was secondary to the process. Isn't that where they got the term, secondary education?

Doc has me on Plavix and all kinds of heart drugs these days. I never had a problem with my heart that I knew of but after the war, I developed high blood pressure and the diabetes. That advanced until I ended up on insulin. Then my hands and feet got numb and he called it neuropathy. I looked that up and it means dead/sick nerves. It's some sort of circulation problem, thus the blood thinner. Well, I'm going to live until I die, but that pretty much summarizes the past 10 years. Nice place to live these days, the United States of America. Lots of people going to church these days.

You know that General Richard B. Myers was succeeded as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff by a Marine, don't you? On 10Oct05, General Peter Pace, a Marine, became the new Chairman. His term was supposed to end on 30Sep09, but the Dem in charge of the country kept him on. Man has about 7 rows of ribbons; he's a warrior's warrior. Started his Career in Vietnam and finished it at the top of the heap. Can't do much better than that.

I think I'll stop now and get some sleep. If I think of anything else to add, I'll do that tomorrow. Mighty strange dream, I'm having...

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